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GAMEFAN

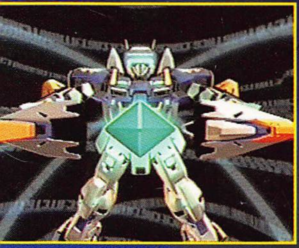
THE LAST TRUE ENTHUSIAST MAGAZINE

Eidos' Fear Effect

Resident Evil Meets Blade Runner with an Anime Twist!

Virtual On 2

Tears Into Dreamcast and We've Got the First Playtest!



RPGs Swarm PlayStation!

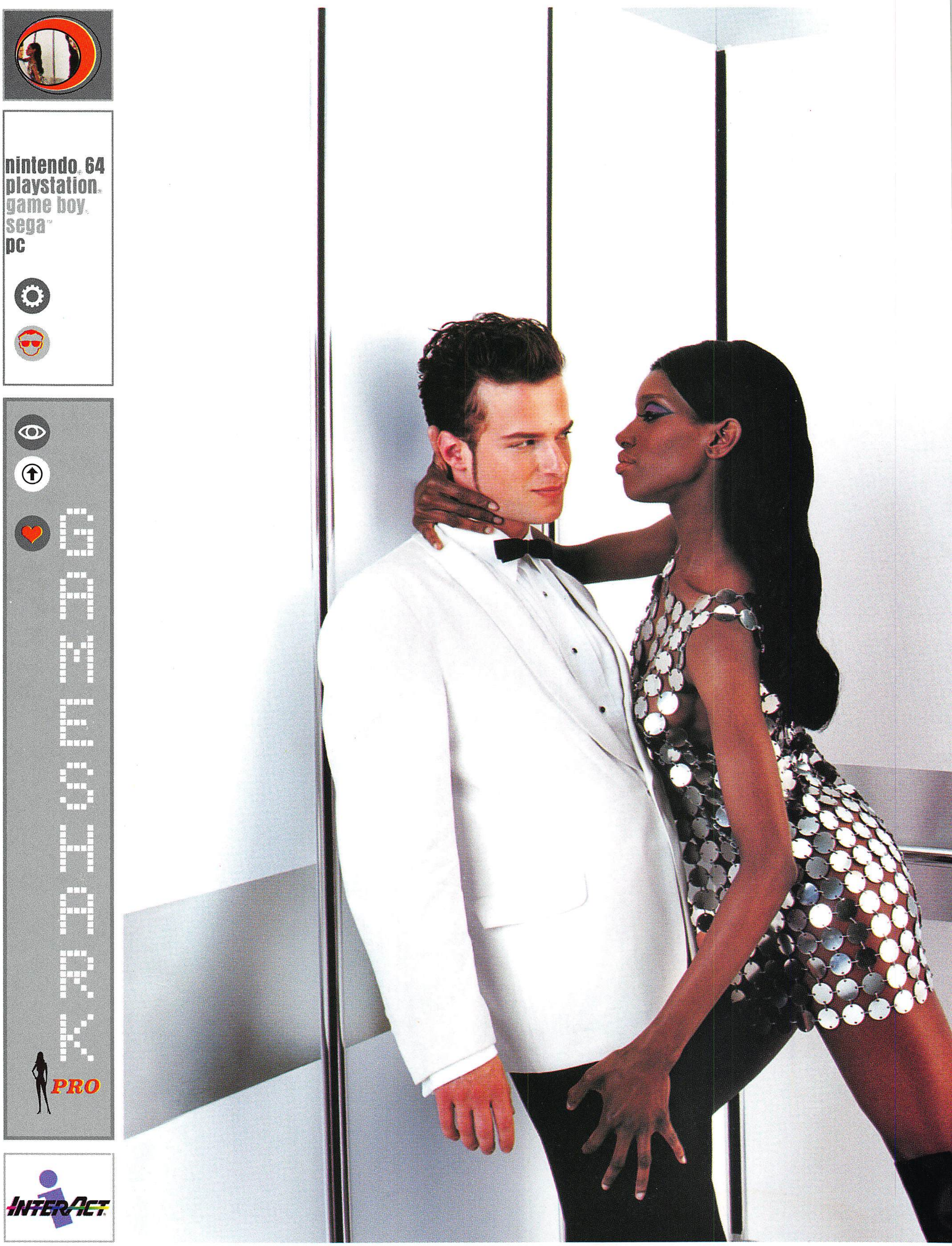
Arc the Lad III
Chrono Trigger
Chrono Cross
SaGa Frontier 2
Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon 2



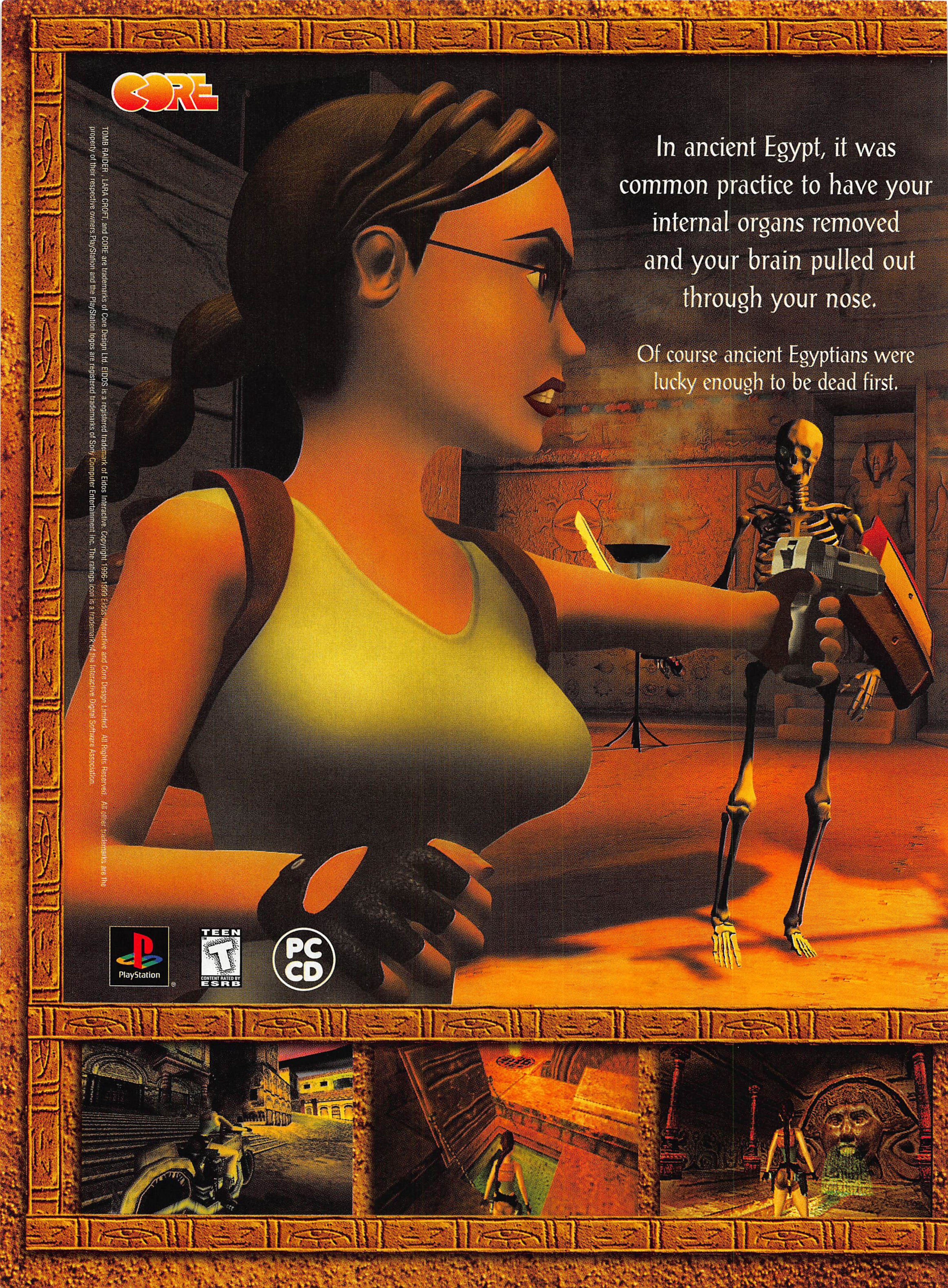
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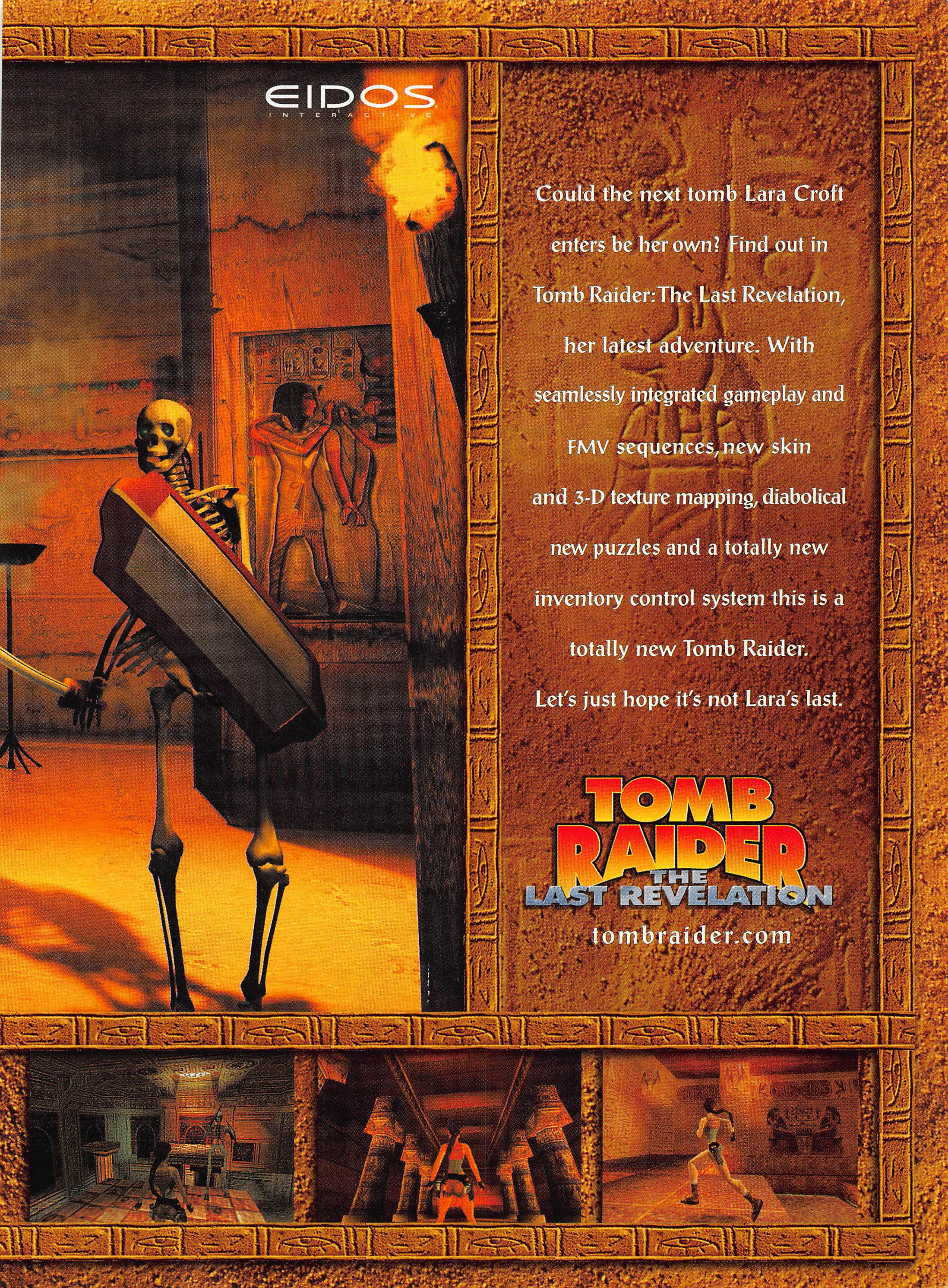
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GAMEFAN
ED ZONE

If there's one thing the video game biz is remarkable for, it's the large number of complete turnarounds many developers and publishers have made. Just when you think a company has given up the ghost, there they are, back in the thick of it and at the top of the heap in some cases. For example, companies like THQ and Activision: both LA-based powerhouses were on the cusp of oblivion in the early '90s and now look at them. Not only have they completely turned around, they're also among the most prolific publishers in the world today. In fact it's quite funny to think that Sega was "doomed" and "going out of business" just a year or two ago. Coming off of a complete international disaster in the form of Saturn (with only moderate success in its native land), many figured they were done for. While they're far from completely out of the woods, the smart money is on a return to at least a portion of their former greatness. Even *GameFan* seems to have benefited from the remarkable resiliency of all things related to this biz. How many people out there figured we'd be alive and kicking after all the tumultuous times we've been through?

Which brings us to this month's cover story: Eidos' *Fear Effect*, developed by Kronos, a company whose name has been synonymous with trash ever since Vic Tokai's *Criticom* debuted around the PlayStation's launch (they also handled the CGI in *Eternal Champions* Sega CD). A legion of titles (not quite as poor as the first) followed: *Cardinal Syn*, *Dark Rift*, *Meat Puppets*... it seemed no console was safe from their hellishly unskilled predations. In fact, I can recall a producer at a company (that shall remain nameless) who asked us **not** to mention Kronos was involved with one of their earlier published efforts. Heck, many began to wonder why on earth anybody was still giving them development contracts and/or publishing deals. However, like THQ and Activision before them, Kronos marks a complete and utter turnaround with *Fear Effect*.

Whereas the best you could say about Kronos before *FE* was that they were the guys that made one of the fighting games for N64... well this game seeks to change all that. What *Fear Effect* does is illustrate something very important: the fact that every game deserves a chance—whether it's by Kronos or Rare. Sure, we could have immediately written off *Fear Effect* as another poor game from a horrid company that we were praying would go away—not that we didn't get the initial urge to run away screaming—but Kronos managed to prove that no matter where you come from, you're still capable of doing something impressive if you put your mind to it. It's just unfortunate that a lot of other people probably won't feel nearly as 'generous' in their appraisals.

Now that I've gotten that out of the way, let's take a gander at what we have planned for next month (can you tell it's a slow month in Ed Zone land?): We have big news in the form of a world exclusive on a certain dinosaur hunting lad you may have romped across the N64 with a time or two. I'm not naming names, but all I can say is get ready to rock one more time... and I couldn't be happier!

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

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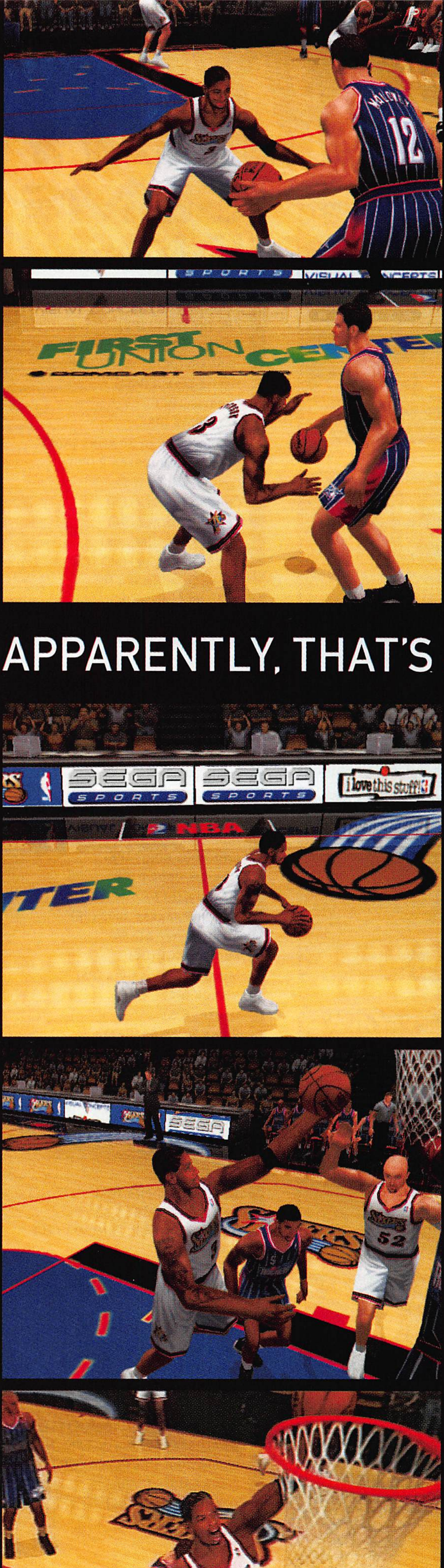

SPORTS
FIRST UNION CENTER
SEGA SPORTS
i love this stuff!
NBA
SEGA

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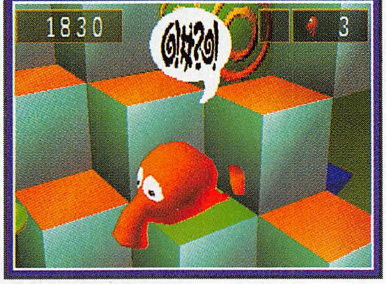
Volume 8, Issue 2 February 2000

COVER STORY



COVER ART BY PATRICK "SPAZ" SPAZIENTE

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Ridge Racer 64 pg. 36



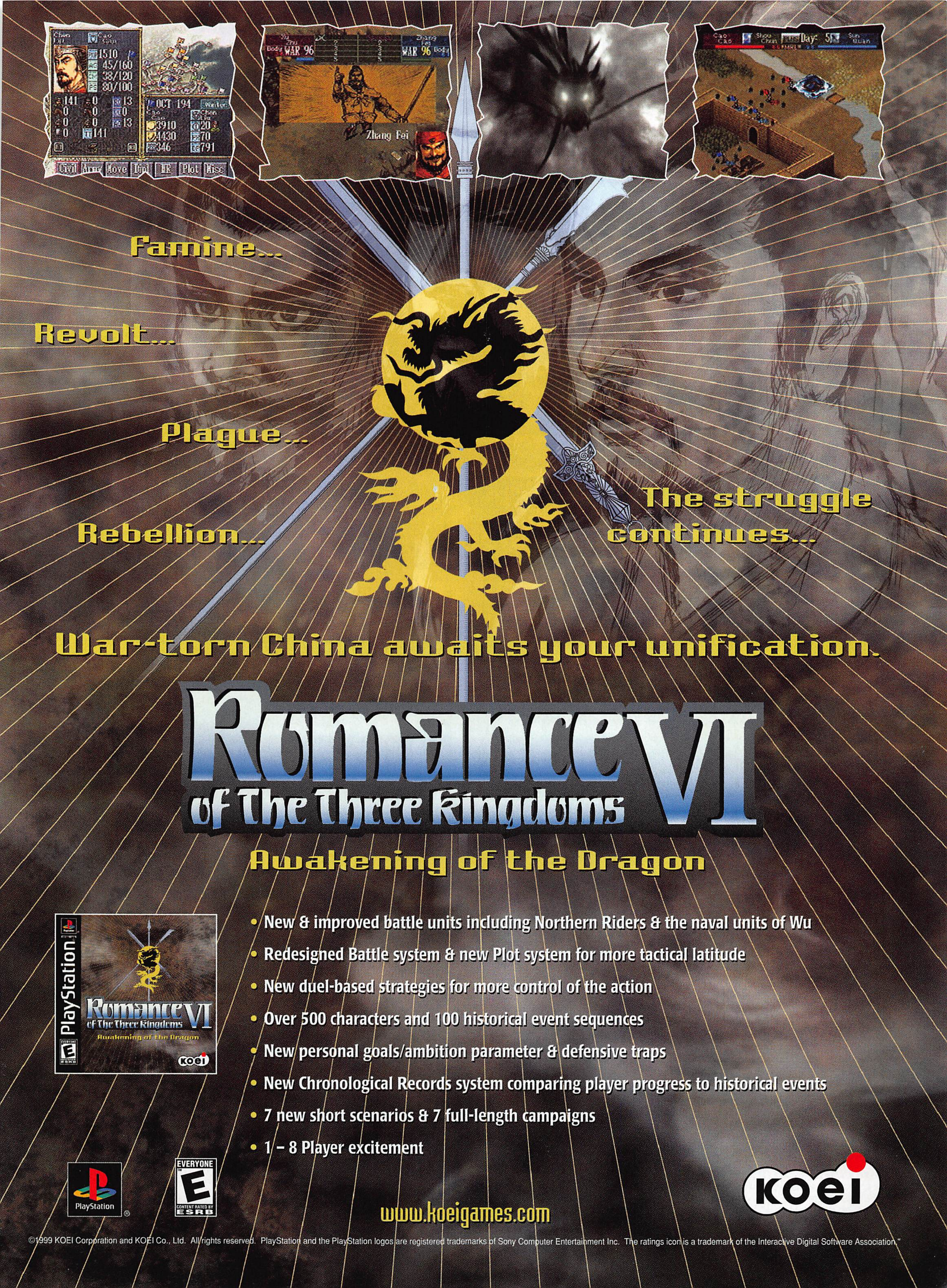
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GAME INDEX



Famine...
Revolt...
Plague...
Rebellion...
The struggle continues...
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• New & improved battle units including Northern Riders & the naval units of Wu
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

February 2000

DEAD OR ALIVE 2

Publisher: Tecmo



Reader's Top Ten

1) Soul Calibur - DC
2) WWF Wrestlemania 2000 - N64
3) Final Fantasy VIII - PS
4) Resident Evil 3: Nemesis - PS
5) Sonic Adventure - DC
6) LoK: Soul Reasver - PS
7) Crash Team Racing - PS
8) WWF Attitude - N64
9) NFL 2K - DC
10) Donkey Kong 64 - N64

Soul Calibur



Reader's Most Wanted

1) Dead or Alive 2 - DC
2) Shen Mue - DC
3) RE: Code Veronica - DC
4) SNK vs. Capcom - Arcade
5) Perfect Dark - N64
6) Spiderman - PS
7) Street Fighter 3 W Impact - DC
8) Chrono Cross - PS
9) Vagrant Story - PS
10) Tekken Tag Tourn. - PS2

GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*Import Title



ECM

1) Rakugaki Showtime* - PS
2) Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
3) Tomba 2 - PS
4) Bangaio* - DC
5) Berserk* - DC
6) Rayman 2 - N64
7) Zelda DX - GBC
8) Donkey Kong 64 - N64
9) Resident Evil 2 - N64
10) M.U.S.H.A. - Genesis



Dangohead

1) Virtual On 2* - DC
2) Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
3) Virtual On 2 v5.4 - Arcade
4) Monster Rancher 2 - PS
5) Rocket - N64
6) Magical Drop F* - PS
7) Magical Drop Pocket - NGPC
8) Wrestlemania 2000 - N64
9) KoF 99: MB - Arcade
10) Virtua Fighter 2 - SS



Cerberus

1) Crash Team Racing - PS
2) Tony Hawk's Pro Skater - PS
3) Rakugaki Showtime* - PS
4) Fear Effect - PS
5) Vagrant Story - PS
6) Virtual On 2* - DC
7) LoK: Soul Reaver - DC
8) Dance Dance Rev. - Arcade
9) Silent Bomber - PS
10) Chocobo's Dungeon 2 - PS



Eggo

1) Worms: Armageddon - DC
2) Chrono Trigger* - SNES/PS
3) Chrono Cross* - PS
4) Monster Rancher 2 - PS
5) Rollercoaster Tycoon: Corkscrew Follies - PC
6) Rakugaki Showtime* - PS
7) Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
8) Q*bert - PS
9) Rayman 2 - N64
10) B.C.'s Quest For Tires - Commodore64



Fury

1) Crash Team Racing - PS
2) Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
3) Virtual On 2* - DC
4) Rakugaki Showtime* - PS
5) Donkey Kong 64 - N64
6) Radiant Silvergun* - SS
7) Zombie Revenge* - DC
8) F1: World Grand Prix - DC
9) Sega Rally 2 - DC
10) Giga Wing* - DC



Judge

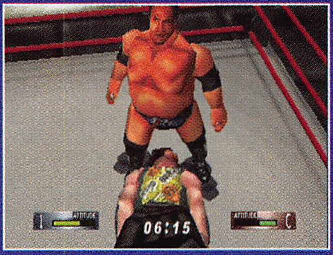
1) EverQuest - PC
2) Worms: Armageddon - PC
3) Chu Chu Rocket* - DC
4) NBA 2K - DC
5) Q*bert - PS
6) NBA Showtime - Arcade
7) Grand Theft Auto 2 - PS
8) Worms: Armageddon - DC
9) Monster Rancher 2 - PS
10) Addams Family Pinball Sp. Ed.

Developer's Top Ten

This Month's Guest:
Chris Rausch
Game Designer, *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, Neversoft

1. Wrestlemania 2000 - N64
2. Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (of course...) - PS
3. Ready 2 Rumble - DC
4. NBA2K - DC
5. Resident Evil 3 - PS
6. Crazy Taxi - Arcade
7. Donkey Kong 64 - N64
8. NFL Blitz 2000 - DC
9. Crash Team Racing - PS
10. Street Fighter EX2 - Arcade

Wrestlemania 2000



Publisher: THQ

"Man, that was a lot tougher than I thought it would be. I started this out as an all-time list, but there's no way I could narrow it down to under 117 games. I'm sure some of these will drop off of the chart once Excitebike 64 and Perfect Dark come along, but for now there it is. Spiderman, THPS2, Spiderman, THPS2, Spiderman, THPS2..."


SAMURAI SHODOWN
WARRIORS RAGE™
II
Coming Soon!
PlayStation
TEEN
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EDITOR ROUNDUP

The life of a ninja gamer: fraught with peril at every leap, a baddie behind every crate, and a boss behind every corner... But there comes a time in every gamers' life when (s)he reaches for that power switch and returns to the Real World <gasp>. So if you're all wondering—or if you're not—here's what we do when we're **not** playing games...

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

ECM spends his free time pondering imponderables such as: why it is *Roadhouse* isn't on DVD yet; why bulging muscles aren't an adequate replacement for precious inches... in height; and exactly **how** low can Ed Round-Up jokes go?

ghiggins@gamefan.com



THE JUDGE

The Judge is one of the more physically active specimens among us. This athlete extraordinaire gets the testosterone flowin' workin up a sweat every Wednesday night in a heated match of... bowling?! Hey, after enough $2 beers, you'd think bowling was a Man's sport, too...

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

Eggo spends his weekly five minutes in the Real World at the beach, rollerblading. Yes, Eggo, gawk at that which you will never have... a beautiful, beach bunny who could care less that you can beat *RE3* in under three hours... No seriously, man, she doesn't care...

fury@gamefan.com



FURY

Since Fury always manages to scurry out of the office before everyone else, it has been whispered that he may in fact possess a 'life' outside of *GameFan*! Worried that he might be bucking the trend, we followed him, only to discover him working the wax hand cart... again.

dangohead@gamefan.com



DANGOHEAD

When Dangohead isn't playing console games at home, or beating the latest SNK and Capcom fighter at work, the People's Dango spends his fifteen minutes of free time at his home away from home: arcades, as the Weekend Warrior... <sigh>



THE 6th ~~MAN~~ WOMAN

GameFan's intern, the 6th Woman, is regularly chastised for the countless hours she spends on the phone everyday. Whether these are actual friends she's talking to or her mother (we suspect the latter), she certainly earns the über-mysterious moniker, UMF.

THE ART DEPARTMENT

reubus@gamefan.com



REUBUS

Reubus spends his late nights hanging out with all the aging rock stars in Hollywood, mulling over the past and wondering, "Why is Skid Row being played on my 'Classic Rock' radio station?"

waka@gamefan.com



WAKA

A former gangster, Waka derives enjoyment from scaring other drivers on the road, giving them dirty looks and flashing his tats and piercings. Of course, it's hard to feel threatened by a pudgy, unarmed gangster, yo...

tao@gamefan.com



TAO

Tao tries to project the aspiring artist image. But while he'd like us to think he's secretly drawing up a storm in his studio at home, we know he's really just another starving sidewalk artist down at Third Street Promenade.

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH

Mission Impossible Pen



Height: 4.43 in.
Weight: 1.37 oz.

Blood Type: A
Special Abilities:
Wookie War Cry

Infogrames had a strong candidate for Chicken of the Month with the *Mission: Impossible* pen, but it turned out to be more of a productivity killer instead. With just a flick of a switch, you can record voice messages and store them for later playback... all in a normal-looking, unsuspecting pen!

Put that sort of stealthy, secret agent power in our hands and what do we do? Record each other unawares... For example, we caught The Sixth Man saying things like, "What's the name of Dodger Stadium?" Or the time Fury said, "I can't call Heather now. She's in San Francisco!" Keep in mind he's in the same time zone.

But the best was when we made fun of online editor Lagi by recording Chewbacca's yells from the *Star Wars* movies and playing them back over the intercom or via the pen. All this because he has a tendency to mumble when he speaks...do you know wookie?

Beware prospective newcomers... *GameFan* appears to be a dream job—playing video games and getting paid, but are you ready for the constant heckling and chopping down of egos that awaits the "New Guy?"

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

Thoughts in a Gamer's Brain

Thanks to the latest breakthrough in modern day science, we discovered a new machine that's actually able to read a person's thoughts. What's the first thing we did? Head over to our nearest retail store to see what wacky thoughts go on in the mind of a video game sausage. Here's the startling results:

Lara Croft... yeah, she wants me—bad. — 38%

How am I going to come up with $500+ for a PlayStation 2 with extra controller, memory card, sideways console stand, DVD player accessory, add-on toaster, can opener, pocketknife, etc. — 27%

If I connect two VMUs, align them with the poles, during a lunar eclipse, turn my console sideways, and use an eye of newt, will I finally be able to play *NFL2K* on my import Dreamcast? — 14%

Who exactly is stupid enough to buy *Superman 64*? — 8%

Must remember to pre-order *WWF Smackdown* — 7%

Keeping track of constantly slipping release date for: a) *Shen Mue* b) *Perfect Dark* c) *Dragon Quest VII* — 5%

In all honesty, how big could Dango's head really be? — 1%

CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

Crank Radio

A few months ago, Capcom graced us with a very cool hand-powered lantern, which was also Chicken of the Month. Well it seems their team of crack crank-scientists has been hard at work ever since. Their latest hand-powered product of joy? A radio which never needs batteries! It's even got a solar panel if you get lazy—perfect for the beach. Just turn the crank a few times, *Resident Evil*-style, and the radio's juiced for over half an hour.



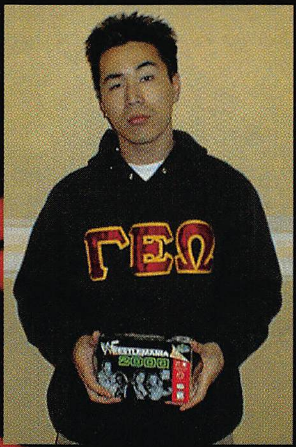
But don't let Cerberus get anywhere near the thing or he'll pollute your ears with the sounds of Britney Spears, U.F.O., and Ricky Martin. His musical taste was suspect to begin with, but we recently discovered him in possession of the Devil's Seed itself: the *Pokemon Movie* soundtrack!

Eggo fought long and hard for the radio, and it currently resides on his desk. But we don't understand why he's so excited about an object which requires repetitive hand motions to power? Word has it, if you play with that thing too much you'll go blind.

SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH



This month's Sausage of the Month is of the wrestling variety. Meet John Nguyen, a personal friend of Dangohead (he was sucked into the gravity well of that cranium of at an early age, and never got out) and wrestling freak extraordinaire. He's so into it, in fact, that he plays every wrestling game out there **and** he spends months with the Create-a-Wrestler modes duplicating every member of his fraternity. In this picture, he's barely containing his excitement, as he holds *WWF Wrestlemania 2000* in his hands for the first time, while giving us the People's Eyebrow. We've heard horror stories of how John will perform 'wrestling' moves at a party if he gets drunk enough (we'll leave the punch line to you). That's first-class sausage material right there...



If you'd like to be Sausage of the Month, just send in a picture and give us some examples of how hard-core you really are, and you could be immortalized in the hallowed pages of *GameFan*! Direct all entries to Posty's address.

VIEWPOINT













G Graphics
C Control
P Play Mechanics
M Music
O Originality



Chocobo's Dungeon 2
PlayStation
Square
Dungeon
Reviewed page 31



Up until the release of *Evolution* on DC, I would've rather eaten tacks than play a dungeon exploration game (preferably of the thumb variety). Unfortunately, *CD2* isn't half the game that *Evo* is. The fact that it's aimed at a 10 years and under crowd doesn't help the matter any (and just because everyone is playing it in Japan doesn't mean it isn't designed with kids in mind). Repetitive play, bland graphics, and a lackluster story... I'll pass.

G 6 C 6 P 4 M 7 O 4 — 58



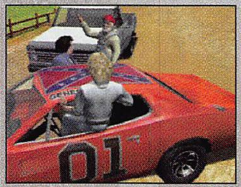
Wow, Square made a sequel to yet another game that I have absolutely no interest in. I might not be the biggest RPG fan around, but I can certainly appreciate a well-crafted game—*Chocobo Dungeon 2* is far from being well-crafted. Don't get me wrong here, I like the Chocobo character and can appreciate Square's enthusiasm in trying to land the little chicken his very own titles, but a mere dungeon explorer? I'll stick to *Chocobo Racing*.

G 6 C 6 P 5 M 7 O 7 — 67



I can't help myself! The Chocobo is too cute to ignore. Forget Pokemon, Chocobo's where it's at. I know it's a simple dungeon romp with not much going on, but I like it. Play this with a friend and the 2-player mode can actually make it fun for even the most hardened gamer. It's not an RPG for the hard-core, but it'll do if you've got a li'l brother that wants to try RPGs. It's cute, it's easy, and it's Square. What more could you ask for?

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 8 — 71



Dukes of Hazzard
PlayStation
South Peak
Racing
Reviewed page 29



Clearly the two gentlemen to my right (I use that term loosely) weren't weaned on the good ol' boys like I was. If you loved the Dukes like I did, you need this game. Sure, the engine is dated, but I sure as hell had a better time with this game than I did with the über-repetitive *Driver* (and that sold about a billion copies). The game is fast, and the infamous bow and arrow that the Dukes never seemed to use in the series is here-YEEEEHAAAA!!

G 7 C 8 P 7 M 6 O 8 — 85



"Here in Hazzard County, time seems to stand still..." so opens the game's intro, and I couldn't agree more. If your cash-run detector went off, it's for good reason. Here's a license game you wanna steer well clear of. *Dukes of Hazzard* is a poor man's version of *Driver* (which I wasn't crazy about to begin with) that's way easier and boasts a *Dukes of Hazzard* theme. Yee-haw! I can honk the horn on the General Lee! Yee... yee.. yeh... ee... haw...?

G 5 C 5 P 7 M 6 O 7 — 52



Yeeeee-haw! I reckon nobody likes to play a game with the same scenery for every stage. that's exactly what *Dukes of Hazzard* is—a trip through the same doggone stage. Sure, there's a different objective each time, but it's always the General Lee. This game might've worked in the '80s, but I'll take my *Gran Turismo 2*, please. Pass this redneck trip through the South, it ain't worth it. Make look pretty, but looks are deceiving...

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 4 O 4 — 60



Q*bert
PlayStation
Hasbro Interactive
Puzzle
Reviewed page 26



Let the retro-gaming onslaught continue unabated—we're bound to come back around to the glory days of 16-bit in due time (shooters will make a comeback)! Till then, however, updated games like *Asteroids*, *Space Invaders*, and *Q*Bert* will keep me more than happy. Unlike Fury, the Judge and I had a blast with the new modes, and the old mode is classic old school gameplay at its best. This may just be the king retro-fest of '99.

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 6 O 9 — 90



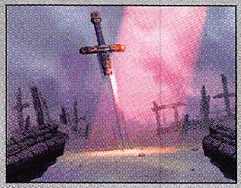
I'm embarrassed to say it, but I've played more *Q*Bert* than any other game in *Viewpoint* this month. Maybe it's a sad commentary on the state of games these days that *Q*Bert* is my choice when I want to relax and enjoy a **game**, not a car combat war, not an interactive movie, not an action/adventure... just sit back and dodge Coily all day. What started out as a friendly competition with The Judge turned into a heated *Q*Bert* rivalry.

G 3 C 5 P 10 M 4 O 9 — 91



I don't know whether to thank Hasbro or pimp slap them. *Q*Bert*, one of the great arcade games of all time, is coming home and I am so psyched. Now I can play all day at my desk (much to ECM's chagrin). While I love to smack Eggo around at the original, none of us are particularly interested in the new adventure mode... Hasbro should be scolded for putting zero effort into updating this classic... but at least it isn't *Frogger*!

G 4 C 9 P 10 M 4 O 4 — 92



Saga Frontier 2
PlayStation
Square
RPG
Reviewed page 20



I'm a big fan of qualifying my Square Viewpoints with the statement "Well, it's better than *FFVIII*" and this one's no exception to that tired rule. Then everyone remembers that I despised *FFVIII* and thinks twice about my sanity and whether *Saga* is actually better than it. Well, for my money, it is. Beautiful watercolor visuals with horrific animation (RAM, my kingdom for some RAM...) and a mildly compelling story. I'll stick to *Grandia*, though.

G 9 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 6 — 80



Man, does Square know how to make a good-looking game or what! With all the Square titles in the works (they seem to come out every other week in Japan), you'd think that games like *Saga Frontier 2* would suffer the same fate as... let's say *Racing Lagoon*. Eons better than the previous *Saga* on the PS and possibly even a better game than *Chocobo Dungeon 2*—that was a joke, of course. Skip the *Fantasy* and follow the *Saga*.

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 9 — 90



Remember to pick up a copy of this beaut when buying *Chocobo's Dungeon 2* for Little Timmy. This is what *FFVIII* should've been: good. The art, stunning; the story, one of a kind; the game, fun as hell. There's just not enough of these RPGs around. *Saga Frontier 2* has everything you like about Square and doesn't have anything you hate. This definitely makes up for *Saga Frontier* on the PlayStation. It's like being in a storybook, it's that good.

G 10 C 8 P 7 M 9 O 9 — 95



Tomba 2
PlayStation
Sony
Adventure
Reviewed page 32



Tomba 2... The way the orginal *Tomba* should have been. Take the quirky character design of the original and throw in some new polygonal magic and bam—you have a well thought out platform game. Don't let the cute little piggies fool you, *Tomba 2* is a solid platformer that resembles the 2D platform games of old. Add in some psuedo-RPG elements and some good old fasion mini-games and you've got a rock-hard outing from the boy with the pink hair.

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 6 — 83



Well, this is better than the last *Tomba*, but *Swine's Revenge* is not my cup of tea. Granted, it's designed for kids, but will Little Timmy like this? I hope not. Sure there's a lot of little chores to do and multi-tasking galore. But I don't want chores in my game, I want fun, which is what *Tomba 2* is not. There may be mini-games up the wazoo, but if none of them are fun, then what have we? Another year, another *Tomba* I will pass on. At least it's more fun than *Spyro 2*...

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 8 — 78



First *CTR* and now *Tomba 2*? Light years ahead of its predecessor in every possible way, *Tomba 2* is more fun than a bar mitzvah. I can't say I was a fan of the original, but I'm sold now. The mini-puzzles are just the right difficulty and are varied enough to keep you into it as you slap some pig booty. *Tomba 2* passes the Fury checklist with flying colors: graphics, gameplay sound, fun factor. Now where's my N64 *Tomba*?

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 7 — 96



Will someone give this dead series a rest? I know it sells truckloads, and for some strange reason, people dig it. There's more to this genre than what *Twisted Metal* offers, though. If you want a real car-battler grab some *V8* or go for the real deal with *Rogue Trip*. 989 really dropped the ball when it picked up where SingleTrac left off. Sub-par graphics, no gameplay enhancements, boring level designs. Hey, everyone, it's *Twisted Metal 3.1*.

G 6 C 6 P 6 M 4 O 5 **64**



Ok, I know that as much as I dislike the whole car combat genre, it will most likely never die. While nothing I can say will change the fact that *Twisted Metal 4* will sell a ridiculous amount, I must stress this one point to our devoted readers.... please, help stop the madness! These series never change... EVER! While the control is tight and some of the weapons are nice at first glance, it's old... all of it! If I wanna torture myself, I'll play *Tomb Raider 4*.

G 7 C 8 P 5 M 6 O 4 **60**



If there's one thing this year's crop of car combat games has proven, it's that I miss the glory days of Singletrac and *Twisted Metal 2*. While they've gone on to the lackluster *Rogue Trip* and *Streak* series (<ack>), 989 keeps trying to equal its former greatness—to no avail. While I was one of the few that enjoyed *TM3* last year, it's apparent that even with better graphics, level design, and gameplay, this whole genre is getting very stale. Perhaps on PS2?

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 5 O 4 **75**



Twisted Metal 4
PlayStation
989 Studios
Car Combat
Reviewed page 27



I'm truly shocked here, I can't believe I'm seeing *Ridge Racer* on the N64. But a version this good!? Just when you think you know a console, a game like *RR64* comes around and proves that you should never sell a system short. I would have bet big money a year ago that the N64 would never land a true car racer... man, am I eating my words. The real shock though—Namco didn't even program this game! More in-house Nintendo magic!

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 **94**



Well it's about time... over three years and the N64's best racing games are *Episode I: Racer* and *Beetle Adventure Racing*? At least Namco decided to fill the void in the library with this solid racing installment. Even better, the announcer has been toned down by the restrictions of the cart format! *RR64* is the king of 64-bit racers, but titles like *Gran Turismo 2*, *Sega Rally 2*, and *Gran Turismo 2000* are also turning heads on other systems.

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 6 **91**



If I can't have cars that handle like real car (a la *SR2* or *Racing Jam*) I'll always opt for the next best thing: neck-snapping speed. *Rage Racer* delivered that like almost no other game and now along comes NST's first game, seeking to at least challenge the reverse-running textures of its ancestor. Blazing speed and plenty of tracks along with no pop-up visuals make ECM a happy boy. The best *Ridge* game to date (but not *Rage*...).

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 5 **88**



Ridge Racer 64
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Racing
Reviewed page 36



Hmmm, I'm not sure what to think of this one. Yeah, it's *V8*, but some of the magic from the first is gone. Maybe Eggo's right, this genre is in need of a breakthrough game, not unlike what *SFII* did for fighting games. All things considered, I can't see any reason why not to give this one a go. This is one genre that hasn't been killed to death on the N64. It's not a buy-game, but more along the lines of a definite must-rent.

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 6 **78**



I have had my fill of car combat... What was once a novel and exciting idea now barely registers a pulse. Then we've got Activision's *Second Offense*. Unfortunately, this game features some snapped control which makes the gameplay experience that much worse. The collision detection is also sketchy, as cars routinely drove through me like I wasn't even there (hmm... maybe that's what life is like for UMF every day...).

G 9 C 3 P 6 M 8 O 2 **71**



Yes, last year's edition was truly an eye-opener, introducing a whole new level of, uh, level design and much-improved graphics. However, this year it's just another car combat game. Something really needs to happen to keep this genre from fading faster than Dana Plato's acting career. I'll have to side with Eggo on the collision issues—watching other cars travel through yours at every turn got old fast. Even the superior DC rev is poor.

G 8 C 5 P 5 M 5 O 3 **74**



Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense
Nintendo 64
Activision
Car Combat
Reviewed page 38



I don't like *Sega Rally*, I never have and never will. Why would anyone want to race around a dirt track when there's asphalt? The inconsistent frame-rate almost drove me to insanity. I'd rather see a constant 30fps than an occasional 60—it's just not right, especially on the, allegedly, powerful Dreamcast. This isn't France, and I'd have to argue that you're better off waiting for *MSR* or picking up *Extreme Racer* before considering *Rally 2*.

G 7 C 8 P 6 M 6 O 7 **60**



Sega Rally 2 may be the best console racing game for some people, but not for me. The Rally theme is a turn-off, and the new *Ridge Racer* and *Gran Turismo* games are more appealing. Not to mention the frame-rate still sputters, and online play is disappointingly absent. If this game is released later in 2000 with online play, then I'll like it more... if I'm not playing *Gran Turismo 2000* by then. The best racer on DC, but not on console.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 7 **90**



The key thing missing from 99% of the racing games on the market is the simple fact that they don't give a feeling of actually being behind the wheel of a real car (*GT* included). This is where *SR2* excels. There probably isn't a single better racing game on the planet from the point of view of actually making it feel like you're behind the wheel of a real car (outside of maybe Konami's *Racing Jam*). Ignore the frame-rate problems and get ready to race.

G 9 C 10 P 9 M 7 O 7 **92**



Sega Rally 2
Dreamcast
Sega
Racing
Reviewed page 40



Looks like everyone at the office has Worms again... As if the game didn't take all our time away already, now Dreamcast fans can get into it. It looks prettier than its N64 brother, but *Worms* isn't about graphics, it's about hyper-addictive gameplay. I don't know how to convince you to give this one a chance if you haven't already. The weapons won't convince you, neither will the graphics, oh I know—you get to blow up worms!

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 8 **90**



Worms: Armageddon on DC isn't as good looking as the PC version, which also offers the crucial Wormnet-play (prove your skills to the world!). However, *WA* DC is the best looking console version. We've already established that the gameplay is great, the replay value is tremendous, and the personality is just oozing. If you don't already own this game, what're you waiting for?! You'll never leave the house once *Armageddon* strikes.

G 7 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 9 **95**



While Cerberus has worms of the biological variety (probably caught them from the hole he calls an office), there's no question that GFHQ has been the site of some non-stop *Worms* madness going on for two solid months now. And with the hi-res DC version to cap it all off, we can take a deep breath... and play some more *Worms*. In fact, until *Chu Chu* makes a U.S. appearance, this is the DC multiplayer game to get—long live Team 17... now about a *PX* sequel?

G 6 C 8 P 10 M 8 O 9 **93**



Worms: Armageddon
Dreamcast
Hasbro Interactive
Strategy



If it's *House of the Dead*-related I'm there and guess what? Not only is *Zombie Revenge* related to the series, it does a fantastic job of taking it in a different direction. Who wants to play the generic, and simply boring, *Dynamite Cop*, when *Zombie Revenge* is an arm's length away? Tons of moves, weapons, enemies, and secrets put this one up there with *Final Fight* in my book. Welcome to the *House of the Dead*, ghetto style.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 7 **95**



Zombie Revenge looks great, has an awesome theme, and plenty of things blow up. But just because it has plenty of flash doesn't mean it has plenty of substance. The control is a bit sluggish, and the gameplay isn't as fast-paced or slick as a *Streets of Rage 2* or *Final Fight*. Sega, will we ever see another *Streets of Rage*? The console exclusive Boss mode is fun, but the Vs. mode is a waste since the control leaves much to be desired...

G 9 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 8 **83**



Well, I'd still rather have *Spike Out* (the spiritual descendant of *SOR*), but this will do nicely till it puts in an appearance. Blazing NAOMI-sourced visuals, coupled with the always-fun-if-done-right beat-'em-up genre equals one of the best NAOMI ports yet. Nothing was left behind (though I'm still pretty sure that water texture in the sewers is different) and if it's a 'side scrolling' beat-'em-up you're after, you're not going to do any better than this... until *SO*, of course.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 7 **89**



Zombie Revenge
Dreamcast
Sega
Beat-'Em-Up
Reviewed page 42

Neo China isn't a place for the weak...





I hate to admit it, but sub-par games have been synonymous with Kronos for a very long time. 'Games' like *Criticom*, *Dark Rift* and *Cardinal Syn* ring a bell? However, no one can argue that the company does seriously killer computer animation (nearing, and in some cases beating, even Hollywood movie houses), but gameplay... that's a whole other can of worms. Well, *Fear Effect* is attempting to lift that curse. Is it that Kronos chose to support the wrong genre all this time? Everyone can say they've played a fighting game—I mean, who hasn't? But not everyone can dissect a fighter down to its most basic elements and spit out a *Tekken* or a *Virtua Fighter*.



Wee Ming Lam is the daughter of the most powerful Triad leader in Hong Kong.

Introducing *Fear Effect*, Kronos' first foray into the survival horror genre with a futuristic twist. With its super-stylized look and megalopolis setting, *Fear Effect* could easily be mistaken for an anime or graphic novel. Using an engine similar to *Resident Evil*, Kronos combined '3D cartoons' with pre-rendered backgrounds and did it well. Hana, Deke, Glas, and everyone else share the look and style of *Jet Set Radio* and the cinematics of *Toy Commander* (both on Dreamcast). If you haven't seen *Jet Set* or *Toy Commander*, just think cartoon animation in 3D. This unique approach comes off well and sets the mood perfectly. Bruce Wayne only wishes Gotham looked this good... so does *Blade Runner's* Deckard for that matter.

Wee Ming, the daughter of a very influential Chinese drug lord, err... kingpin, has gone missing. Shan Xi isn't very safe, particularly for a young heiress who has been sheltered all her life. It's your job to find her and collect a portion of that big fat piggy bank. The life of a merc ain't easy; Hana, Glas, and Deke will have their hands full with a mission that's more than they can handle. The trio isn't exactly what we'd call the "good guys"; they're in it for the money, just like Han. Not until much later in the game is it made clear what Wee Ming really offers. Nice twist, wouldn't you agree? Not many games offer the hard-edge that a lot of movies do—it's good to see someone giving it a shot. The genre may be trite, but the original story makes up for it.



Yes, child?





That is it? Madam Chen's



fear

REVIEW CERBERUS: Survival horror, hold the horror, please.	Developer - Kronos Publisher - Eidos	1 Player Available 1st Qtr.	Viewpoint Score :87

...it's yours for the taking.



Screenshots alone can't describe how "with-it" *Fear Effect's* visuals are. Hana moves with a feminine grace Lara could never attain. Experienced animators and proper key-framing add up to animation that rivals and even surpasses motion-capture. I would've never guessed Hana's cat-like walk was not the product of a motion-captured actress. Going along with the superb animation are equally impressive backgrounds. Not content with using static backgrounds (like the other games in this genre), Kronos has pushed the envelope as far as it'll go. Rooftops and villages alike are bustling with energy. Signs flicker in the night, turbines spin, and planes cruise by. That's enough to make any pre-rendered background interesting. But with the good comes the bad—some of the backgrounds are way too compressed; overall I'd say it's better than worse. When the people at Kronos told me that they'd heard the PlayStation couldn't do some of the effects here, I believe it. My mind's already spinning with the thought of *Fear Effect II* on PS2...

Escaping the grubby clutches of zombies has never been my thing. I like *RE* and survival horror, but fleeing from enemies instead of fighting them is lame. The whole zombie premise is way old, also. Who can't name a dozen games out now starring the undead? To its credit, *Fear Effect* has no zombies—err, wait... well at least it doesn't have dinosaurs or dead killer babies. And ammunition and weapons aren't scarce either. There are a few occasions when Hana or her co-stars must fend for themselves without any sidearms, but not often. I don't know about you, but I dig sneaking up behind a guard and takin' him out.





John Zuur and Stan Liu have succeeded in creating a game that's fun **and** has a great story. Even if the story wasn't enthralling, *Fear Effect* would still rock. If you're an *RE* fan, it has control you'll feel at home with. The camera angles are *muy* dynamic, with the occasional real-time camera movement, and there's that zap system we've come to know and love. When one character can't go any further, another one becomes playable (e.g., a couple minutes into the game, Hana is captured, then Glas becomes the playable character with a different objective). Though it was also featured in *RE2*, this system breaks up any monotony developing with a single character.



It takes a lot of hard work to get what you want sometimes, but it appears Kronos may be on the brink of its first really good game. After a series of games that haven't made the grade, it's encouraging to know that Kronos is reaching that plateau. What we have here ain't bad at all. Some of the enemy placement and background quality I can do without, but *Fear Effect* is well worth your time.



effect

fear effect: why GF staffers avoid the rest room for approx. an hour after use by Cerberus. (GF Dictionary Entry F-119.17)

Interview with John Zuur Platten Director/Producer of

fear effect

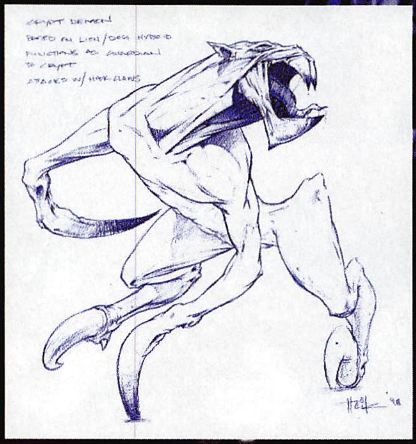


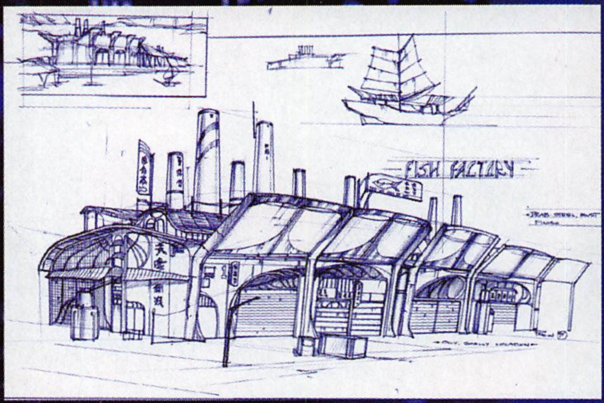
GF: Can you give us a rundown of what you've done?

John Zuur Platten: I'm the Producer, Director, Writer, Designer for *Fear Effect*. I've been in the games business since 1993. I worked on the Sega CD as well as PC. My first project was the Visual Effects Supervisor for FMV titles. These projects were *Ground Zero Texas* and *Double Switch* for the Sega CD. I then created a Sega CD game called *Tomcat Alley*, which I was the Writer, Designer, and Producer for. After that, I worked over at Propaganda (a division of Phillips Entertainment) and developed a number of titles for them. I did the PC game *Johnny Mnemonic*. After that I worked for EA and Origin. And I've worked on multiple design projects. Most recently, I've worked on some of the early development for *Battle Zone* and now *Fear Effect*.

GF: Kronos has never been thought of as a good developer, and I'm sure *Fear Effect* will change this, what made you want to come to Kronos?

JZP: Personally, it was meeting the people here that really got me interested. At the time, I was an independent contractor—sort of a gun for hire. I would go around solving problems for people, helping them with design issues, or coming up with weapons, characters, and plot points. I also thought of how design could be integrated into story and gameplay. Then my son was born in June of '97. So as I sat down and thought about it. I enjoyed the idea of being this hired gun, but it was [un]steady and I wanted something a little more steady. I started looking around at various companies. I saw Kronos and at the time they had a fairly interesting game called *Meat Puppet* which had a dark, heavy attitude, cyberpunk-like thing going on which has always appealed to me. I met them through the Internet and called them up, came on down and met the people. Once I started to get a vibe for the place and met the key players like Stan, the president, Sandy, and the other lead artists, I really thought it was a good group of people that really just hadn't yet found that title. I felt that if I could in some way contribute to that, it'd be a fun experience.





GF: Who is responsible for the *Fear Effect* story?

JZP: Basically myself, for the most part. The original core ideas and concepts started with Stan. He had this idea about wanting to do an action-adventure that was very cinematic, which was something that I had attempted before and which I felt was on the right track. Stan had this cinematic idea, and he wanted it to have an Asian influence. He had a very basic story of a girl who had run away and was somehow related to Chinese mythology about hell. And that's sort of what I started with. From there, I branched out and really ran with it. The core idea started with Stan, and from there I developed the story and characters.

GF: Why letterboxed?

JZP: It turned out to be to our benefit, but it didn't start that way. We wanted the game to be letterboxed all the time because we were going for this cinematic look. We also felt that we didn't want to be cluttering the screen within the actual image itself. By letterboxing it, we were able to use the black bars for our inventory elements, and that kept the screen clean at all times. So that became a very nice thing for us. Then on top of that, when we began to figure out how we were going to make this thing, Mike Fernie sat down with us. He had a lot of technical issues to address. And when we said to him, "Oh, by the way, we were thinking about letterboxing the screen," he said "Great. I've got less video to push around, better for me." So it became an issue that started as an aesthetic but ultimately helped programming. And because our engine is doing so much already (our engine is a 3D engine combined with a real-time movie player), it has already maxed out what the PlayStation is capable of. Coming up with this sort of design concept and aesthetic ended up benefiting the programmers in building the engine.

GF: Could you describe how your engine works with polygons and video?

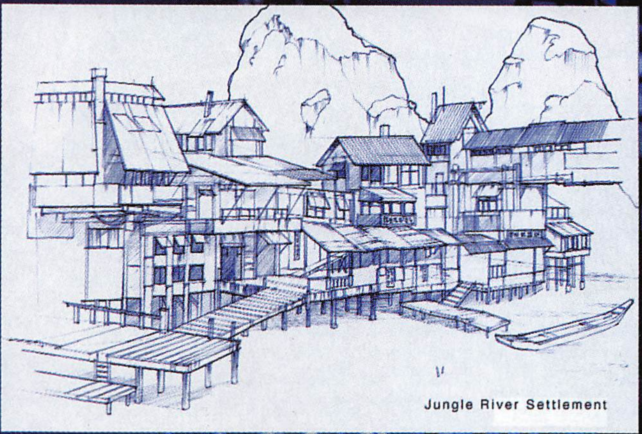
JZP: *Fear Effect* is a 3D game. When you move the character, you're moving through true 3D geometry. We don't display the geometry. In its place, we display constantly streaming video—what we call MotionFX technology. What that means is that we have a real-time 3D engine running simultaneously with the real-time movie player. What the movie player does is present to you all the imagery you're seeing, and what the 3D engine does is provide all the collision and interaction in the game. Over that you have a full-3D polygonal character you're controlling. Depending on the character, you're looking at an individual between 600 to 800 polys. We use a seamless model. The difference between our 3D characters and the characters you see in a lot of games is that we decided to go with a real anime-graphics style.

So the characters are intentionally made to look animated; they have a very Japanese anime feel to them. We went with a very limited color palette on the characters and very graphical texture maps. What that did is provide us with a character that's very distinct and unique.

She's stands out—as do all three lead characters—against the environments because it allows you to see the character quite well against the dynamic backgrounds, because of the constant streaming of video. I think on top of that it's a look people are used to. They're familiar with anime films or some of the highly stylized animations coming out of the U.S. recently. Really the final reason to do it was so we could flip back and forth seamlessly between narratives and gameplay. And one of the core things we wanted is for the character you're controlling to be, for all intents and purposes, the same character seen in the narratives.

GF: Has the game undergone any serious changes or modifications?

JZP: I think every game goes through its birthing phase. The game was actually much larger originally, because I had a lot of crazy notions and ideas. It would have been unproduceable in a single pass. We had to refine the story and tighten certain gameplay elements. But throughout that process, we found a way to bring more control to the character and give the character more to do than what we first thought—so there was a give and take there. In terms of the actual core technology, our lead programmer Mike Fernie had figured out most of it before we presented the game to Eidos. So the engine itself has been in place since we started working on the project, and the core ideas regarding the game have remained, for the most part, unchanged since we started.



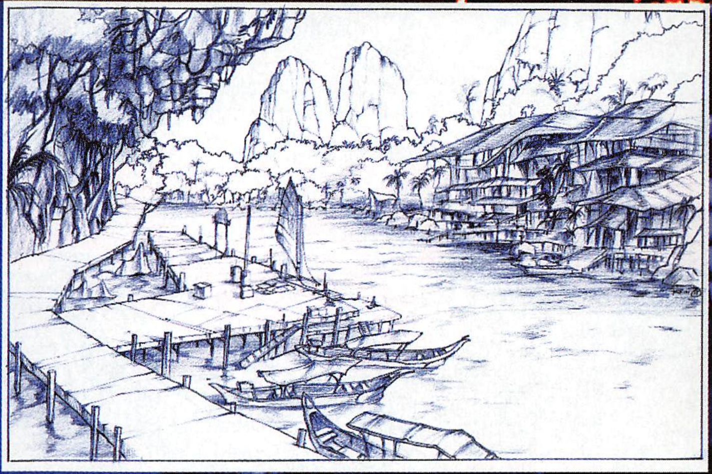
Jungle River Settlement

GF: When you started two years ago, how many people were on the project and what's that number up to now?

JZP: When we started a couple of years ago, there were about four people working on the project. And now, at last count, we have about 25 people working. We have five programmers, three full-time designers (myself included), and the remaining members of the team are artists. We have people who are focused almost entirely on characters.

GF: There's no motion capture anywhere in the game. Were you happy with what you got?

JZP: We really made a decision early on. We've done motion-capture work in the past and we felt it'd be better to key-frame the animation because we were specifically going for that anime vibe. Sometimes with motion-capture data, you get too much information. You almost end up with what becomes a person inside a suit when you see it on the screen. You see this very basic, graphical character, but it's moving with such fluidity that it has a very natural looking form to it, and it looks jarring and unsettling. We knew that we wanted to create a distinct vibe. Sort of stylized and in many cases hyper-realistic, and we decided the best way to get that was through key-frame animation. So it started with Ted and Francis doing a lot of the key-frames and a lot of our artists, who were not as fluent with key-frames, started working with them and learned a lot of the techniques. I think, overall, I'm very happy and satisfied.



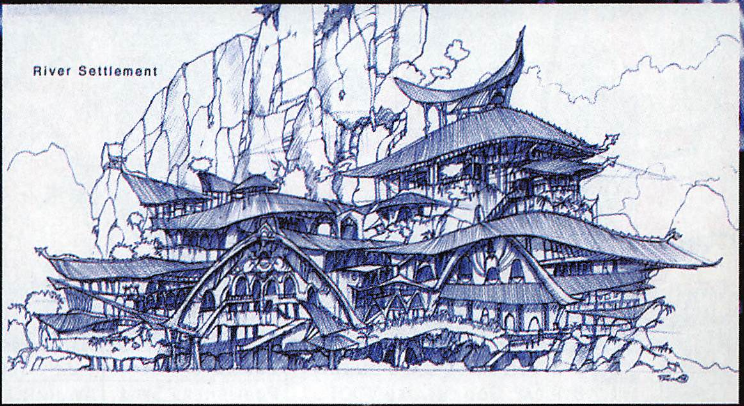
GF: Where do you see *Fear Effect* going?

JZP: I would love to see this thing on PlayStation 2. As you've seen from the visual quality we're trying to bring to the game, it's something truly amazing to see. I have yet to put my hands on a development kit for PlayStation 2. I can only say that from what I've seen and heard, [*Fear Effect* on PS2] would be quite amazing. Obviously, our goal right now is to make the best game we can and to get it out there. We'll let the market decide if we did a good job or not. I've very confident that with the support of Eidos and the skills that its people have, this game will do well.

In terms of potential, as I mentioned, we had a lot of additional stuff that was cut to make the game doable for this PlayStation. A lot of that cool stuff could find its way into some sort of sequel. I've also been thinking about other places to take these characters and the story. Should *Fear Effect* take off, everybody here would love it... to see these characters go other places. One of the things that I think Eidos has been smart about—it's even the current market slogan, "Games with character"—and which the gaming public is starting to realize, is that to have a truly compelling gameplay experience, it has to be more than just hot fast as soon as you put your fingers on the controller. It really needs to get to new levels. It needs to have some of those traditional story-telling skills attached to it. I think that much the same way people are getting attached to characters in *Resident Evil* or *Metal Gear Solid* or *Tomb Raider*—I think people are starting to realize that that's truly where you find whether you've done the right thing or not. If you have a compelling character, or a set of compelling characters, being able to take those to other media... that's certainly exciting. I remain optimistic, but our focus right now is to get the game out the door.

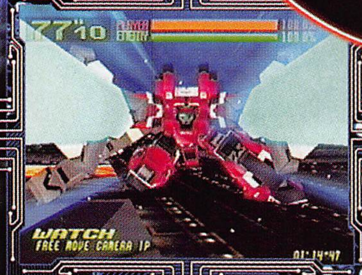
GF: What's next?

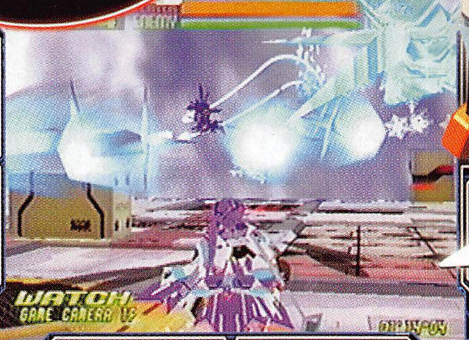
JZP: After this I just want to take a long vacation. I'm not sure what we're doing next. There's talks of a potential sequel. I had some ideas for interesting gameplay concepts that we could mold into a fairly compelling experience outside of what the current platforms are capable of, but exploitable on PlayStation 2... so I'm starting to flesh that out. In terms of where the company's heading, I'm not sure. Our focus right now is to ship *Fear Effect*.



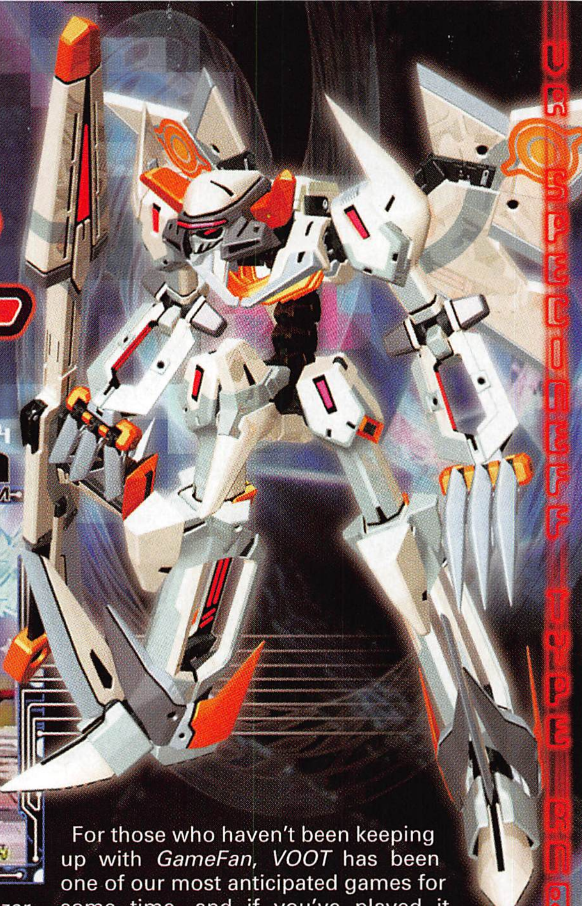
River Settlement

CYBER TROOPERS
電脳戦機バーチャロン
VIRTUAL ON
M.S.B.S. Ver.5.4
ORATORIO TANGRAM™



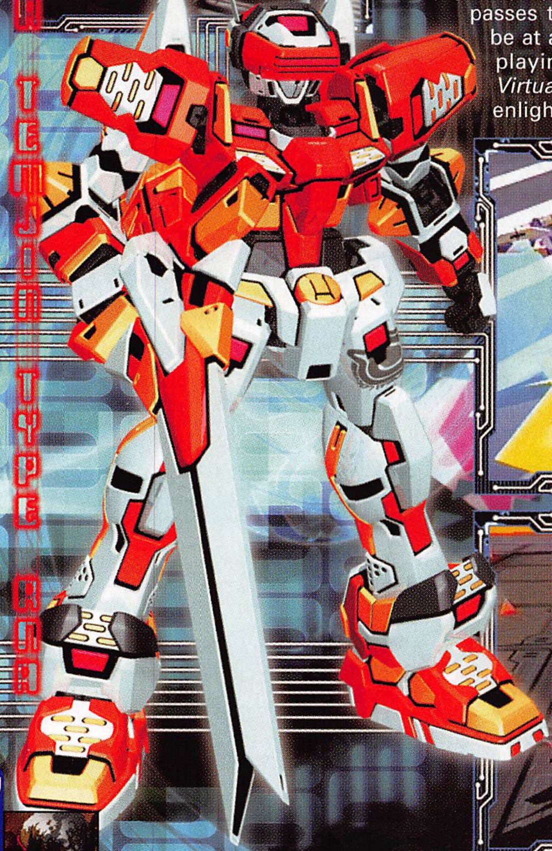






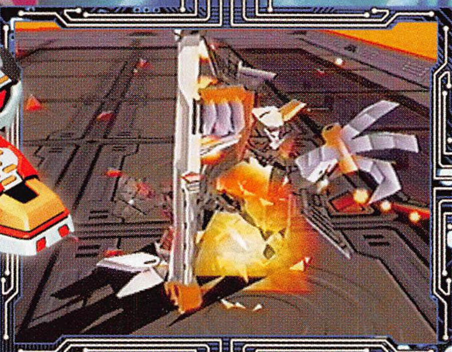
In my time, I've seen great games like *Panzer Dragoon Saga* and *Zelda: Ocarina of Time* and waded through crap like *Eggs of Steel* and *Superman 64*. But to expect a video game to have spectacular visuals, crisp control, and deep gameplay, and then finding out that it surpasses those expectations... well you'd be at a loss for words too. Now, after playing the Dreamcast version of *Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram*, I am... enlightened? At ease? Content?

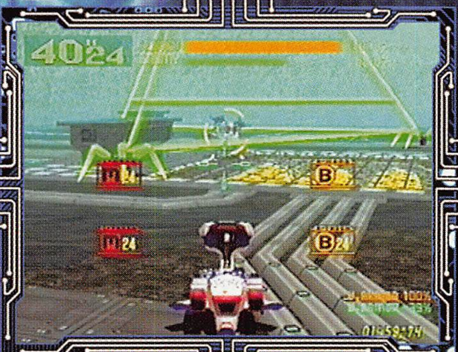
For those who haven't been keeping up with *GameFan*, *VOOT* has been one of our most anticipated games for some time, and if you've played it, you'd know why. The sequel to *Virtual On: Cybertroopers*, *Virtual On Oratorio Tangram* is essentially the same game. The object is to select a robot (or "Virtuaroid" as they've been dubbed) and battle it out with another monstrous mech on a 3D battlefield. These arenas have hills, dips, buildings, and other structures which can be used for offensive or defensive tactics. Considering all the weapons in this game, careful use of those









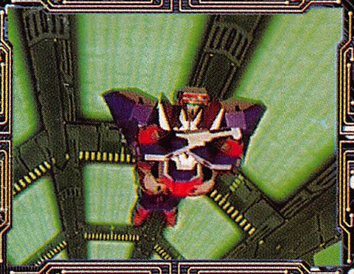


PREVIEW DANGOHEAD: "...AND ON THE 8TH DAY, GOD CREATED VOOT..."

Developer - Sega	1-2 Players
Publisher - Sega	Available Now Japan

IF YOU THOUGHT SOUL CALIBUR LOOKED GOOD...YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHIN' YET!







obstacles is necessary to survive. Oh, and it's not just about launching a volley of missiles or an array of artillery either; when two Virtuaroids get close, it's time for a little hand-to-hand combat. Add to that some astounding graphics, teeth-shattering explosions, and an unbelievable level of strategic depth and you've got about 1/10th of *VOOT*.

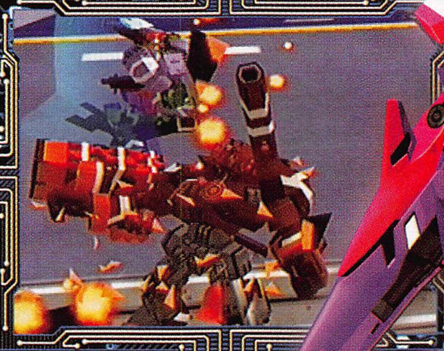
What has been improved in the DC version of *VOOT*? Graphically, the game blows the doors off anything you've seen on the Dreamcast! The game runs at a blazing 60 fps, and the overall visuals are better-than-arcade-perfect. We're talking superbly detailed textures (better than the arcade) and a resolution so high, it'll scorch your pupils. Astounding light-sourcing, incredible transparencies, and dazzling pyrotechnics are just the beginning; we haven't even begun talking about the new Virtuaroids such as: the ice-wielding Angelan, the Reaper-like Specineff, the missile turret known as Grys-Vok, or the short, stout, and strong, ECM-like Dordray. Returning characters sport graphical enhancements and a cargo bay full of new weapons. And some of the stages feature dizzying transparent floors, moving objects, and an underwater battlefield—all of which add a new level of strategy to the game's already deep portfolio.





But the big surprises are the new features. These include four console-exclusive arenas: three from the original *Virtual On* (Viper, Dorkas, and Raiden) and a totally new stage called the AutoBahn. Training Mode allows you to practice all the intricacies of this game (and believe me, there are many);





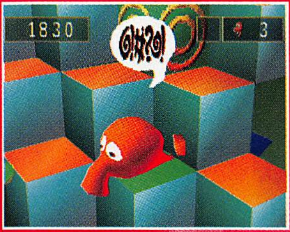


Watch Mode allows you to admire CPU vs. CPU battles from any angle; and then there's Configuration Mode. Not only can you customize the colors of your Virtuaroid, you can also create a personalized logo! This customization helps distinguish all the mechs when you do battle online with the *VOOT*-only DWANGO server in Japan. While *VOOT* doesn't have a dial-up feature for the U.S., you can play split-screen (running at 60 fps!) versus a human opponent or opt for the link cable with two Dreamcasts and two televisions!

While everything looks perfect, there are some areas which could use improvement. *VOOT* is such a kinetic game that when too many missiles, energy beams, and crazy stuff happen all at once, the game slows down. Also, the split-screen mode runs at 60 fps, but the textures lose a lot of detail. And will U.S. importers be left without any Internet play? All these questions will be answered next month in the full blowout review of what could be the best Dreamcast game yet... are you ready? **D**

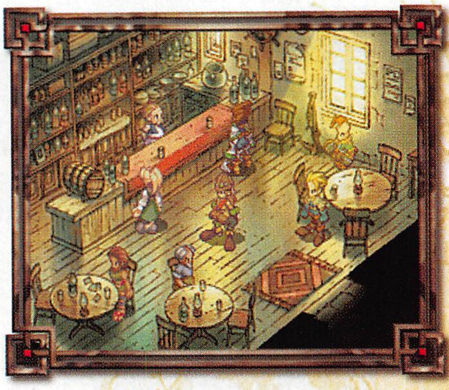
PlayStation

Reviews





Preview



After countless hours in therapy ("Tell me about your Mother, Eggo. Was she a... breakfast cereal?"), and multiple hypnotism sessions, I was finally able to blot out the memory of *Saga Frontier* entirely. Then, I opened an issue of *Famitsu*, and it all came crashing back... "No! A Sequel!" Let's face it. The first *Saga Frontier* was terrible. There's no defending it; even hard-core Square lovers had to admit that the company had stumbled a bit with that RPG. It played as badly as Fury does Softball, looked worse than Dango in the morning after spending a night at the office, and was as fun as listening to Reubus' tales of the night-life in North Dakota. Coming from the company that brought us *Final Fantasy*, *Saga Frontier* was an RPG which could only be described in one word: disappointing.



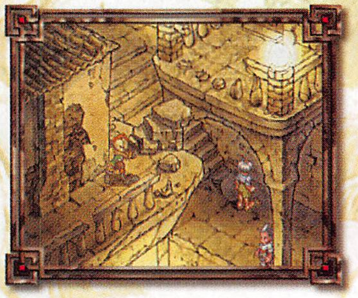


So it's understandable that the announcement of *Saga Frontier 2* generated as much fanfare as our *Jurassic Park: Warpath* tournament... <tumbleweed rolls by>. But as soon as the first screenshots were released, it looked like we might forgive Square after all...

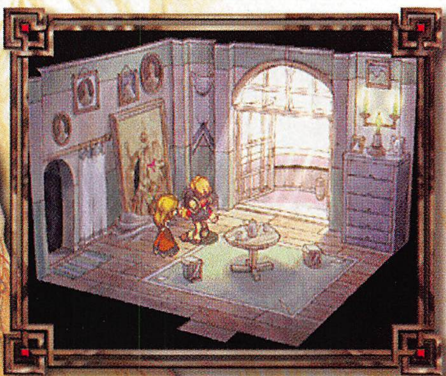
Wanting to turn this series around, the company gave *SF* a serious facelift. So you've got the highest-paid Beverly Hills surgeon on the payroll, working overtime for two months re-designing the look of this game... (actually, it was a team of 25 artists working over a year). But it won't amount to much if the game doesn't play well, right?

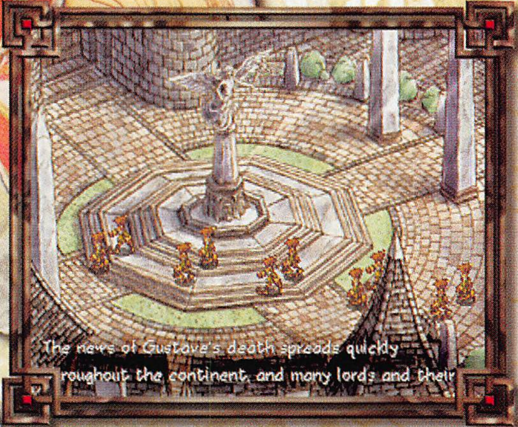
Well, the gameplay's been changed drastically... for the better? I'm not sure about that. Instead of playing like a standard, old school RPG ("Party of Five" before the television show), *Saga Frontier 2* is more like reading a storybook than playing a game. Here's what I mean: start the game; sit through 10 minutes of storytelling with the option to save every chapter; play through a brief dungeon sequence; then











go back to reading dialogue for another five minutes; etc. There's probably as much non-interaction as action in *Saga Frontier 2*, meaning that you'll spend the same amount of time reading and hitting "X" to continue as you will actually 'playing' the game.

While this sounds like a horrible fate, the good news is the story is excellent. The saga that's told deals with multiple generations of the royal Gustave family. Gustave XIII, the rightful heir to the throne, is spurned by his father (the king Gustave XII) because he does not possess anima—the 'stuff' which lets one cast magic. In a kingdom where everybody can wield magic, young Gustave's inability to do so earns him ridicule from the townspeople and his immediate family. Forced to flee the kingdom with his mother, Gustave takes with him the legacy to the throne. So when his father passes away, the land is in turmoil, clamoring for a king. The battle for succession follows...

Square's localization team is on top of their game with the translation for *Saga Frontier 2*. The topics are a bit weighty and serious, so it would be disastrous if the script was laughable. But thankfully, it's one of the best translations yet, if not the best ever done by Square. Just know that this is one of those serious RPGs like *Xenogears*, not light-hearted like a *Grandia*.

Saga Frontier 2's visuals, which bear a **completely** different look from than the last game, are fabulous... reminiscent of *Final Fantasy Tactics* to a degree. The detail in the backgrounds is astonishing, and it's all hand-drawn goodness (which has officially been put on the endangered species list of video games). So enjoy this one while you can.

Reading *Saga Frontier 2* (since that's what you do half the time) is like experiencing a good book... scratch that, a good storybook. With every new screen that loaded, my feelings were a mixture of awe, wonder, and anticipation. This was a visual feast, and I was a starving-for-2D man on a desert island.









Then there's the flaws... The battles—what few there are—are a bit tedious, since they're a bit too long. We're not talking *Final Fantasy Tactics*-long, but definitely a lot more time-consuming than a random encounter in a traditional Square RPG should be. Maybe the battles tend to drag because the developers wanted to stretch out the actual 'playing time' parts of the game — "Gimme a hand here, I know we can wring out another round of combat if we try hard enough!" Yup, you know what flaw I'm getting at here—a charge which has been leveled against previous Square games such as *Parasite Eve* and *Final Fantasy VIII*... the crime against humanity of being "more movie than game!" I never agreed with this claim, since I liked both *Parasite Eve* and *Final Fantasy VIII* (even though it was the worst *Final Fantasy* to reach the States) and thought they were good **games**.

Saga Frontier 2, however, crosses that line between being a 'game' and something else... I'd classify it more as a storybook, with gameplay elements. It's a great title which I recommend to all my friends... but all my friends like to read. Square should just send half the copies of this 'game' to Barnes & Noble and the other half to video game retailers like Electronics Boutique. Everyone should at least experience *Saga Frontier 2* once...

Eggo still has Saga Frontier 1 *flashbacks whenever he hears words like "Blue" or "Lute," and he has an unnatural fear of lightbulbs.*







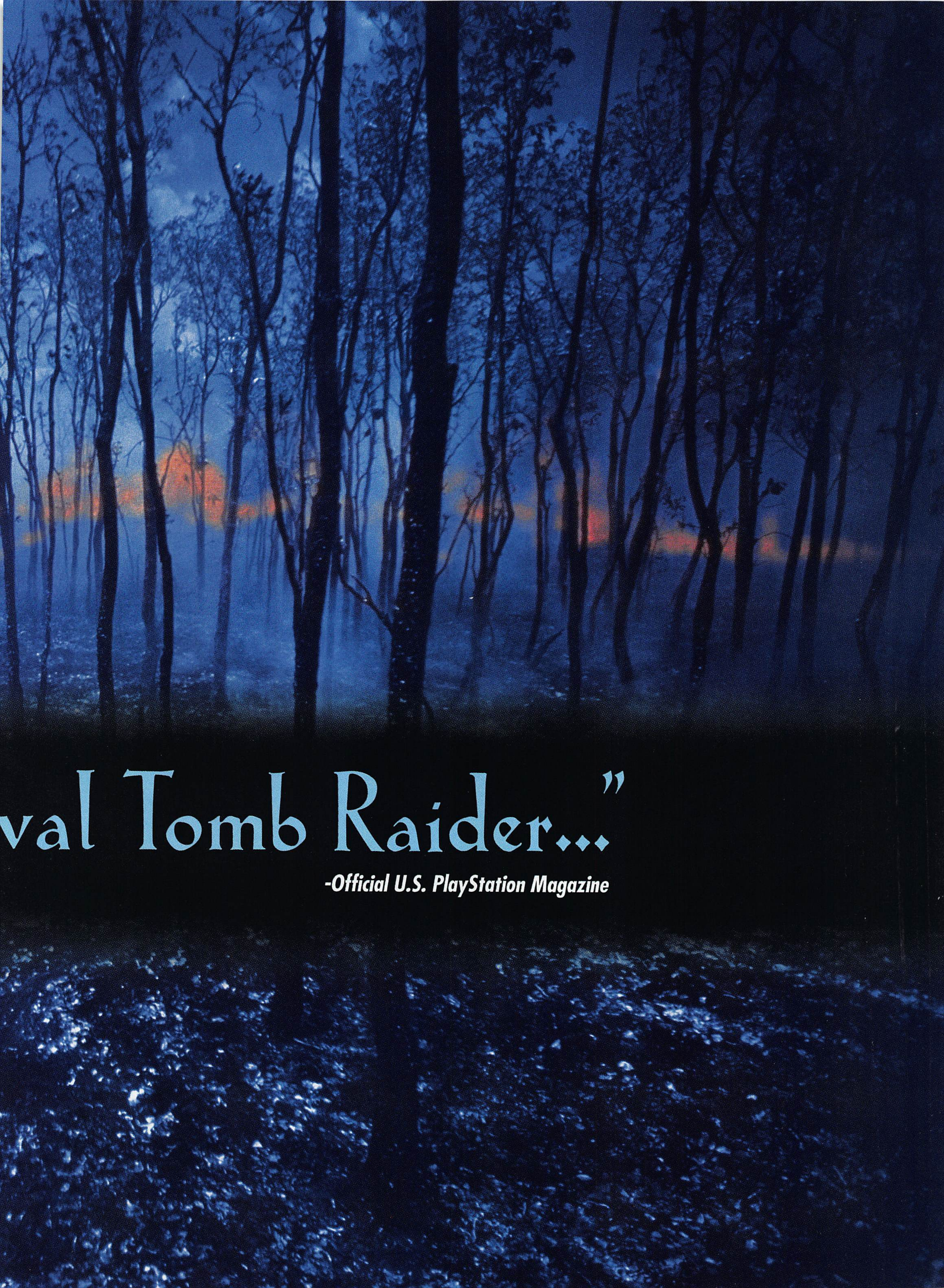
SaGa FRONTIER™ II

Saga Frontier 2

Viewpoint Score :83	Developer - Squaresoft	1 Player	EGGO: Mmm...
	Publisher - Square EA	Available Feb. 8	Yummy.

REVIEW


"At Last... a Medie


val Tomb Raider..."
-Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

"After reaching legendary status on the PC, the Might and Magic universe is ready to cast its spell on the PlayStation."

-GamePro

Play It With a Vengeance.

Prepare for the ultimate battle of good and evil. As Drake, a lone mercenary toughened by years of hardship, you're swept up into the midst of a Crusade in the incredible 3D fantasy-action lands of Ardon. Your only mission is to rid the land of the same vile evil that annihilated your family. Then, and only then, will you have your revenge!

- A unique blend of action and role-playing
- Conquer 5 dark and hostile worlds, over 15 levels in all
- Slay your enemies through scores of grueling quests
- Go to battle armed with a variety of wicked weapons & sizzling spells







CRUSADERS -OF- MIGHT AND MAGIC™

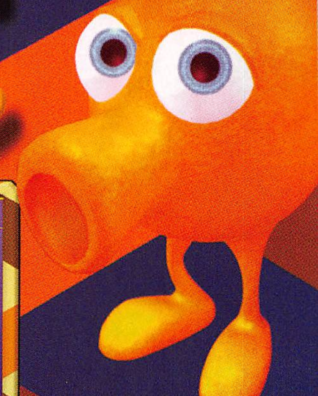

PlayStation
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PRIMA GAMES
Prima Strategy Guide Available
PC CD ROM
3DO
www.mightandmagic.com

Q*bert













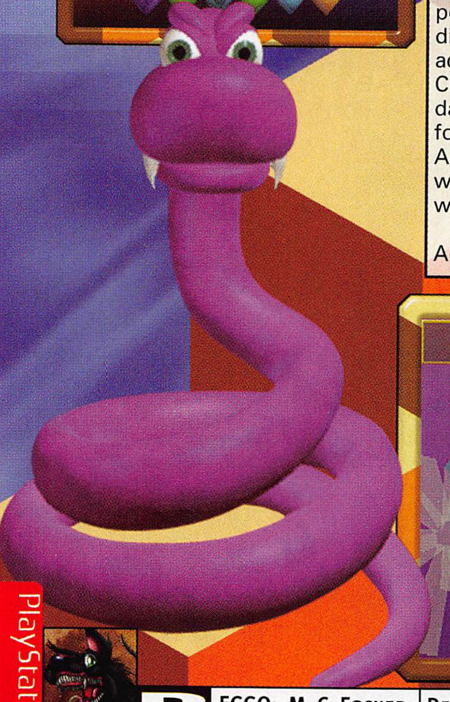
Conniving, insidious, and all around plain nasty—no, I'm not talking about a mullet. I'm talking about Coily, the purple snake from an era long gone; an era that's nearly forgotten. The game industry may be young compared to others like Hollywood, but that doesn't stop it from having a Golden Age. *Q*bert* fits into the Golden Age along with classics like *Pac-Man*, *Donkey Kong*, and *Zaxxon*.

I didn't see this coming... not in my wildest dreams. It hit me kinda like a Mack truck on the 405 freeway. Like *Pac-Man World*, *Q*bert* has an adventure mode. In contrast to Pac-Man's liberal use of the pellet eater, Q*bert's adventure mode stays relatively true to the arcade masterpiece. So, no, Q*bert doesn't have arms or new skills; maybe an item here or there, but that's all. Adventure Mode boards are new, but all aspects—from control down to the enemies—remain consistent. Q*bert, Coily, and the rest of the bunch look great with their new 3D polygonal bodies. Too bad the backgrounds didn't receive as much work. These same character models are put to good use in the original. Classic mode *Q*bert* can be played with its dated graphics or with the same 3D models found in Adventure mode. I appreciated Adventure mode even more after spending time with *Q*bert Classic*. It's hard to believe *Q*bert* was slower than molasses on a cold day...

An area that could have been better in Adventure mode is block placement, or should I say camera placement? Take a close look at some of the shots; notice how difficult it is to tell where a block is in some instances? This happens with alarming frequency the further you progress, and the playfields increase in difficulty. On a similar note, I find it very irritating to lose a life after completing a stage. You see, after changing the color of every block on a given stage, Q*bert still has to work his way to the warp gate. If you're holding down the D-pad or make a wrong move after beating a stage, Q*bert's a goner and you're out one life. While mentioning flaws, I have to bring up one that we can blame on the PlayStation pad. It physically hurts to play *Q*bert* for more than half an hour. An isometric game coupled with a pad that has busted diagonals doesn't make for a happy thumb. The front-end graphics look rushed and aren't very functional, and like I said before, the backgrounds are sorta lame.

I was really excited about playing *Q*bert* all over again, but close to 20 years later it's not the same. Particularly when the developers chose not to make it something special like *Pac-Man World*. Three modes isn't enough to keep me into it. *Q*bert* freaks like The Judge will be all over this one, but I can't help wondering if more could have been done.

Cerberus used to be good at Q*bert, *but now he only plays games with six buttons and circular motions.*







R REVIEW	EGGO: M. C. Escher would be proud.	Developer - Artech Studios	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score: 78
		Publisher - Hasbro	Available Winter	

Twisted Metal 4

You knew it was going to happen eventually... Sweet Tooth, the "King of Charismatic Car Combat" was destined to get his own show, and *Twisted Metal 4* is the realization of that. Ousting Calypso from his position of ultimate power, Sweet Tooth and his upstart band of malcontents take over and throw their own Twisted Metal tournament... and I can't say I like it.

Twisted Metal 4 is quite a departure from the original. If you thought *TM3* strayed from the roots a bit, then *TM4* severs the ties entirely. Here's a little car combat history for you: the first two games were created by Singletrac, but *TM3* & *4* have 989 Studios behind the driver's wheel, after the company acquired the license last year. With the change in developer came an all new engine and a very different 'feel' for the *Twisted Metal* games (Singletrac still owns the original engine which it's beating to death with *Rogue Trip*). While *TM3* sported a brand spankin' new engine, it still featured many of the original racers, such as Warthog, Thumper, and my personal favorite, Mr. Grimm. But *Twisted Metal 4* has an entirely new cast of motor-misfits. That's right, **every** playable character





from the prior three *Twisted Metal* games has been retired to the electronic automobile graveyard in the sky...

So we've got a *Twisted Metal* game with a different engine from the first two, and a whole new cast of car combatants... then what's so '*Twisted Metal*' about this game? Well, the music is a holdover from last year; Rob Zombie's new album is the source for some of the tracks, but unfortunately, they're remixed (bleech!) versions of last year. Also, the weapons remain true to the series (power missiles, napalm, remotes), and the controls are thankfully familiar (tight turn, turbo, machine guns, etc.).



But there's one crucial element missing which isn't noticeable right off the bat—level design. I still remember fondly my college days, battling Tao on the rooftops of Paris in *TM2*. Or fleeing



for my life, doing laps around that office building, picking apart Minion in the original game. Unfortunately, those days of creative environments and strategic driving seem to be over... *TM4*'s level design is uninspired, compared to the classics (*TM1&2*). Now, you've got wide areas of open space, relaxed AI (enemies will let you go, something which never used to happen in *TM*), and bland battles. That fun factor is just not here in the single-player game. So how's the multi-player? Well, the aforementioned level design really hurts things, taking a lot of enjoyment out of the game, even if you're playing with four players on a multi-tap...





I'm trying to find nice things to say about this game, but everywhere I turn, there's general disappointment. There's a brand new create-a-car feature which is innovative and had me excited... until I tried it. Say you want to design a car, I'll walk you through it: pick one of three car sizes, then one of three styles, three paint jobs, and then choose one of the four special weapons. Not exactly *WWF Wrestlemania 2000*'s create-a-wrestler is it? I really wanted to like this feature, but instead, it appears to be more of an afterthought than a push of the envelope (and believe me, this envelope needs to be pushed... or hatcheted entirely).





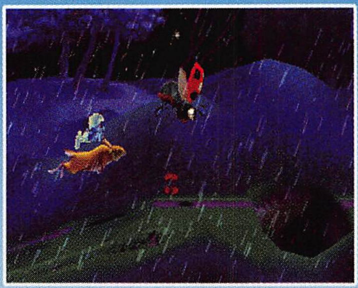
Eggo wishes he had some homing missiles for those UCLA Meter Maids.

Viewpoint Score	Developer - 989 Studios	1-4 Players	Eggo: And I thought **MY** sweet tooth was out of control...
:69	Publisher - 989 Studios	Available Now	



R Review













It is a sad day indeed when *The Smurfs* is heralded as a savior. But ECM and I (and hopefully there are others like us still left...) are so starved for a 2D platformer that we've devoured this game like it was a AAA title, when in reality it's just an average platform game developed for kids 5 and up <sob>. But if you think about it, what were the last three 2D platformers to be released? The import *The Adventures of Little Ralph* (a below average game), *Wild 9* (decent, but that Rig never moved the way I wanted it to), and *Skull Monkeys* (a brilliant game which got as much respect as a sport star's agent). Judging from the miniscule sales those games generated (*Skull Monkeys* likely sold four copies, three of which are accounted for in this office; the whereabouts of the fourth as yet still unknown... though we have a nagging suspicion Doug TenNapel's mother was behind it), it should come as no surprise that publishers aren't jumping at the chance to publish a 2D platformer any more.

Then lo and behold, Infogrames drops by with a very unexpected 2D platformer in the vein of *Mickey's Castle of Illusion* (don't get your hopes up too high, this game isn't that good). Armed solely with the power of the mighty 16-bit butt-bounce, Hefty Smurf sets off to rescue Baby Smurf and the nine other Smurfs who've been smurf-napped by Gargamel. At least Smurfette's not the object of the rescue this game; although there might be a li'l something in it for Hefty if he manages to return Baby Smurf (Smurfette seems pretty easy going about handing out kisses these days). Speaking of Hefty, what's up with his arm? Did he have that tattoo removed in the late '80s when it was no longer cool to have a heart tattoo?

As mentioned before, *The Smurfs* is not a great 2D platformer, but it **is** a 2D platformer with a likable theme (I'm man enough to come forward and say I still like the Smurfs!), and its very existence is a sight for sore eyes. Granted, the control is a bit sloppy; think 'Slippery When Wet' in a floaty world. The gameplay is too simplistic (remember, 5-year-olds), but there's enough substance here for old school gamers to get misty-eyed and wax poetic; it's inspiration enough for us to remember the 16-bit glory days once again. Game developers, don't let this once-proud genre go quietly into the still, dark night.

Eggo raised the once mighty 2D platformer flag on the battlefield, swinging it valiantly to rally the troops... only to be flattened by a large polygonal tank being driven by Donkey Kong.

THE SMURFS

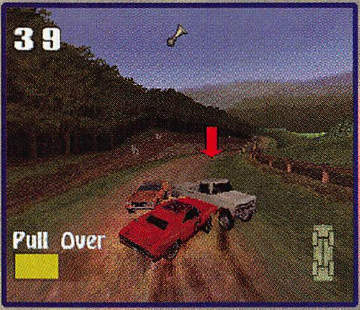


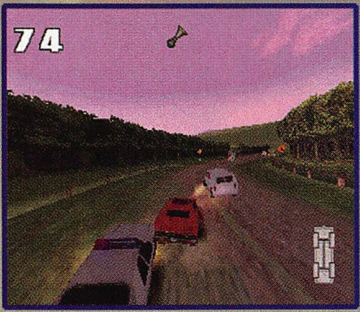
EGGO: ARE THEY ALL BLUE BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY ONE SMURFETTE?	DEVELOPER - HELIOVISIONS PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 83

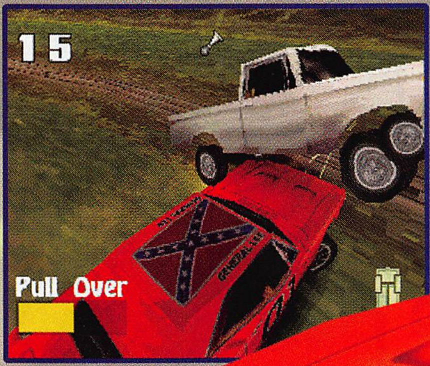
REVIEW

THE DUKES OF HAZZARD™

RACING FOR HOME







Ahh, the joy of a good license... Of course, I used to believe that developers were only after big names like *Die Hard*, *Star Wars*, and *Spawn*. However, these days, it appears most any license will do. Don't get me wrong, I'm not dissin' the Dukes... (ECM don't take kindly to folk who don't appreciate the good ol' boys), it's just I never thought I'd see games based on the *Dukes of Hazzard* or the *Blair Witch Project*. But if it sells—even to a miniscule portion of the gaming community—someone's gonna try and push it. Hey, it worked for *McDonald's Treasure Land* on Genesis (course it doesn't hurt that Treasure was behind the curtains on that one).

Uncle Jesse, is that really you underneath that polygonal model? Whether you're a big fan of Bo and Luke's onscreen antics or not, you have to admit that the theme song to the *Dukes of Hazzard* is one of the most memorable around. The minute I loaded *Dukes* up in my PlayStation, it was a stroll down memory lane for most of the *GameFan* staffers—everyone singing in unison, but off-key, the anthem to that confederate sitcom. But get past the opener and the shock that you're actually playing a *DoH* video game, and you're left with a pretty mediocre PS title.

Though you spend the majority of the game behind the wheel of the General Lee, *Dukes* is certainly not your standard racing game. Each stage plays out like an episode of the show, with a brief cinema beforehand setting up the story. Each has a different, yet basic, mission objective, ranging from losing Rosco P. Coltrane in a high-speed car chase to saving Uncle Jesse from a gang of bank robbers. A poor-handling General Lee and some pretty crafty AI make for challenging gameplay, but the only thing really unique here is the game's characters. The novelty lies with viewing the many rendered cinemas, not the gameplay.

Unfortunately, visuals took a major backseat to fun racing. While the car models look fairly nice, the tracks themselves are nothing to shout about. If it weren't for the huge leaps followed by the classic "Yeehaw," players might actually find themselves falling asleep at the wheel.

Even though I'm a huge *Dukes of Hazzard* fan, I wonder if the game was totally necessary. Obviously licenses don't always have to carry the weight of an *Episode One*, but when the novelty outweighs the gameplay, you've got problems. I'll leave my daily dose of Boss Hog to reruns... thank heaven for TNN.

Fury would like to see more women adopt Daisy Duke's wardrobe.



Viewpoint Score: 70	Developer - Sinister Games	1-2 Players	Fury: Cousins? You mean we're related?	R Review
	Publisher - South Peak	Available Now		



Make 200 New Best Friends!
Vam Biz HALO
H311 H129 H 67
M169 M 99 M 96
Vam spat
Over 200 cute & cool monsters to collect
Breed with your friends' monsters too
Explore *The Mystic World* in Terry's adventure
Challenge your friends with trained monsters
Randomly generating dungeons in *The Mystic World*
DRAGON WARRIOR MONSTERS
GAME BOY COLOR
EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
EIDOS
FEATURES:
• Over 200 cute & cool monsters to collect, tame, and train
• Breed monsters to create stronger offspring with unique magic spells and special abilities
• Play solo, or connect two Game Boys together to battle and breed with your friends' monsters
• A spin-off of Japan's best selling RPG game, Enix's® Dragon Quest
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GAME BOY COLOR
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB





Chocobo's Dungeon 2













Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon Crawl 2—hmm... name doesn't have that 'ring' which the marketing types look for, does it? So maybe that's not the title they wanted to go with, but it's an accurate portrayal of the game: slow-paced (El Niño, post-buffet), drab and gloomy (Reubus, everyday), and it registers a whopping –5 on the excitement scale (the announcement of *Tomb Raider 4: The Last One, We Promise!*). Welcome to the thrill-a-minute world of the dungeon RPG.

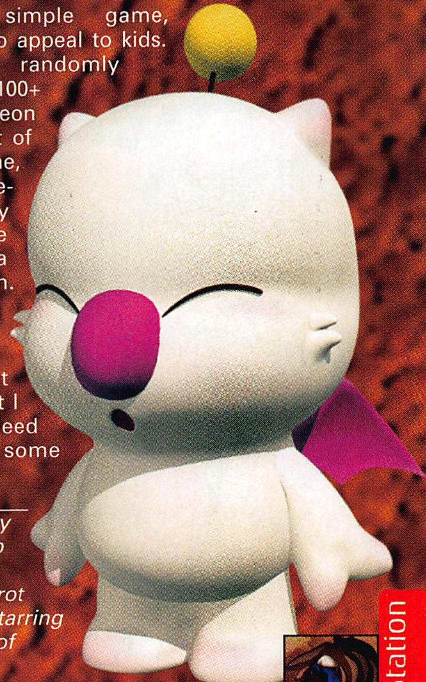
For the uninitiated (consider yourselves lucky), these types of games consist of adventuring through randomly generated dungeons in search of goodies and stairways to other levels, leading deeper into the mono-colored dungeon.

Our torch-wielding hero without arms is Chocobo, Square's cuddly corporate mascot ("Wark!" roughly translates to "I'm sickeningly cute, but I bumped my friend Mog out of the mascot job. Muhahahaha!"). Along the way, Chocobo and friends bump into an endless supply of baddies and hidden traps. The respawning enemies are there to prevent you from wandering the same area too much, because hit points regenerate with every step you take. The traps cause all sorts of trouble: altering your controls, teleporting to a different room, erasing the map for that level, etc.

Speaking of mapping, a large part of the gameplay in *CMD2* involves exploring the dungeon levels, and letting the auto-map function record your path. The rest of the gameplay involves fighting monsters and leveling up. The star of three games in Japan (with one more on the way), Chocobo is not completely infallible. On the rare occasion when Chocobo 'dies,' it's safely transported to the entrance of the dungeon without any items; but, luckily all your experience and stats remain, which makes getting back to the spot of your demise that much easier when re-entering the dungeon at level 1 again.

Fortunately, Chocobo doesn't journey alone. Along the way, you'll run into famous *Final Fantasy* characters such as the white mage Shiroma, Bahamut, and the ever-present Cid. More importantly, friends like Mog (yup, he's not completely out of work, just demoted to sidekick status) will accompany Chocobo for a large part of the game, earning experience for Chocobo while killing monsters on their own. The default game setting is for Chocobo's allies to be NPCs, but by flicking a switch in the option menu, you can set it so that a human buddy controls that companion. The 2-player cooperative mode injects a healthy dose of vitality and fun into this game, making *CMD2* more like *Gauntlet* rather than a typical dungeon crawl.

But even the multi-player mode doesn't completely save this title. It's still a very simple game, designed to appeal to kids. While the randomly generated 100+ floor dungeon offers a lot of playing time, the gameplay is very repetitive and not a lot of fun. *CMD2* can be a huge time-killer if you get into it. But I feel the need to get some fresh air...

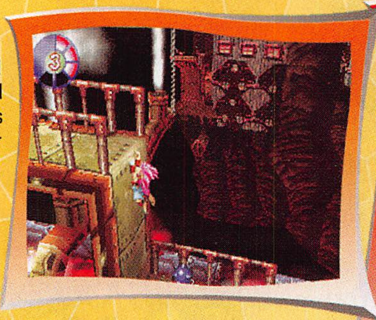


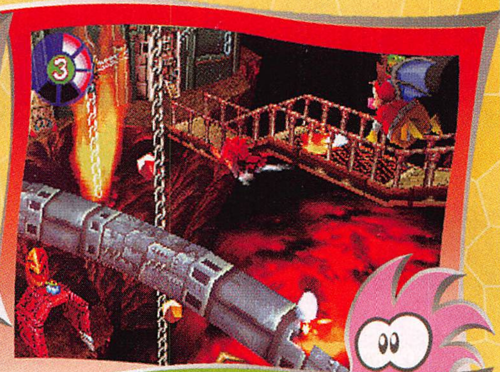
We've lately heard Eggo mumbling about Cactrot someday starring in a game of his own.

Viewpoint Score: 73	Developer - Squaresoft	1-2 Players	Eggo: Can we get a light in here?
	Publisher - Square EA	Available Jan 11	

R Review



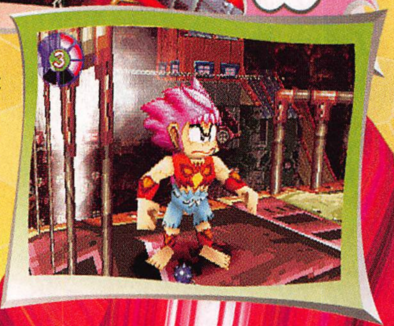




Eleventh hour, end of the issue and ECM hands me *Tomba 2*. I play, I play, and I play some more... and I love the game—it's the best thing since sliced bread. But when it comes time to put these thoughts down on paper, I'm at a loss for words. Every writer deals with this eventually—an unexpected heaping of writer's block, served with a hefty portion of deadline on the side. Other than the super-sharp graphics, tight control, and involving gameplay, what else has to be said?

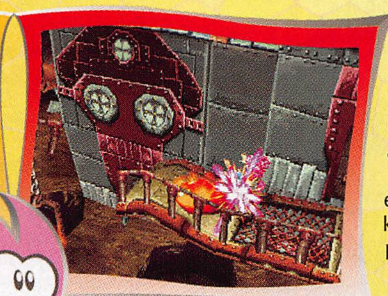
Well, did you know it was directed by Tokuro Fujiwara? Name not ring a bell? Maybe games like *Son Son*, *Ghost 'N Goblins*, *Ghouls 'N Ghosts*, and the original *Tomba* will jog your memory. Also notice that once he hooked up with Capcom, Fujiwara has had a strange infatuation with pigs. Each of his games has had some sort of swine in them, whether it's a main character (*Son Son*) or an enemy (*Ghouls 'N Ghosts*).

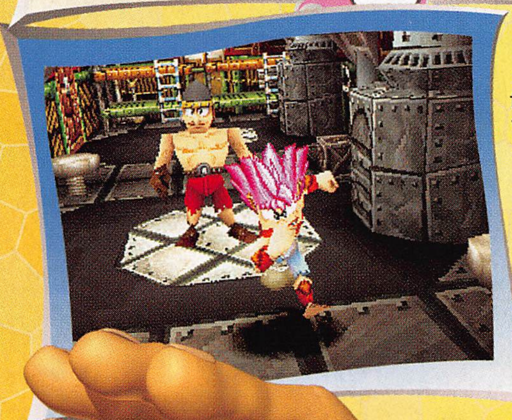
But I digress... Getting back to *Tomba 2*, the game's appearance is far more refined. In the original *Tomba*, the sprites looked cheap when coupled with the 3D backgrounds, but *Tomba 2* sports that same cartoony look which made *MegaMan Legends* so fun to watch. Granted, it's more of the same, but that's a good thing.



When playing a video game, I don't want to think too much. There are exceptions, but usually thinking can quickly take the fun out of a game. At the same time, I get bored quickly, especially if there's not enough to do. *Tomba 2* walks that fine line of giving me things to do (with the many Events), while at the same time delivering plenty of swine and poultry to smite with my Boomerang. Not just that, there's items aplenty, like pants and clothes that do all sorts of wacky things to Tomba such as speed him up or make him impervious to fiery attacks. And all this with a mere digital controller—funny, the game plays better with digital, rather than analog control.







This game's not for everyone (though I know Shidoshi will pick it up because of the pink hair), but *Tomba 2* is begging to be played to death. I'm set in my ways, but *T2* is another game which delivers that fresh, non-jaded feeling that made games so much fun 10 years ago. It's not going to shatter any molds like a *Mario 64* or *Sonic Adventure*, but it's damn good, and I recommend you try it. Sure beats playing another stale sequel <cough> *Tomb Raider* <cough>.

Shortly after finishing this review Cerberus donned a loin cloth and dyed his hair blue (again) to prepare for his game, Tyronba.



R REVIEW	CERBERUS: TOMBA, THE OTHER WHITE MEAT.	DEVELOPER - WHOOPEE CAMP PUBLISHER - SCEA	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE :96





ROAD RASH JAILBREAK™

There's something about sidling up to another biker and bludgeoning him with a pipe that is oh so satisfying. That is, until you veer carelessly into an oncoming car because you hadn't noticed that you'd strayed across the median while laying the smack down. Such is the life of a Road Rasher.

I must admit that I have mixed feelings about this title. *Road Rash* was one of my fondest Genesis memories. I say "was" because this series has been getting beat into the ground like many of the franchises floating around the industry. What was once a novel, adrenaline-pumping game has become a tired, uninspired franchise. What *Road Rash* needs is a shot in the arm.









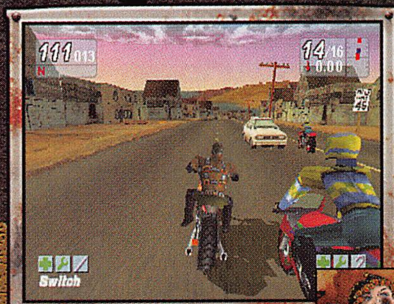
While you can expect the gameplay to be the same as past *Road Rash* titles, *Jail Break* has added some new elements which are sure to excite fans. Foremost is the implementation of an actual story. Ever seen that Boz film, *Stone Cold* (one I proudly own)? That's *Jail Break*. Climb your way through the ranks of a gang and fight your way to the final goal: busting a fellow member out of the Big House.

Also, two new modes have been added that will give the game depth: Sidecar and Five-O. Sidecar is a hilarious multi-player experience where one guy drives the bike and another guy engages in combat from his sidecar. Five-O turns the tables and allows you to play one of the cops trying to pull over the cyclists... but who wants to be the good guy?

Smaller improvements will also be available, like more weapons, and different moves and attack combos for major punishment. What is noticeably not improved much is the engine, which still chugs. A low frame-rate, poor motion capture, and some weak graphics may hinder *Jail Break*.

Whether or not *Jail Break* is that shot in the arm is questionable. While I find myself having a good time whacking bikers and evading cops (ahh, like the good ol' days) the fact of the matter is that this engine looks dated... especially compared to other 4th generation PlayStation games. Then again, maybe the developers will be able to up the poly count, frame-rate, and motion capture for the final. Now where's my *Skitchin*? J





DEVELOPER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-4 PLAYERS	JUDGE: "TONIGHT THERE'S GONNA BE A JAIL BREAK..."	R REVIEW
PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	AVAILABLE NOW		

COMING SOON



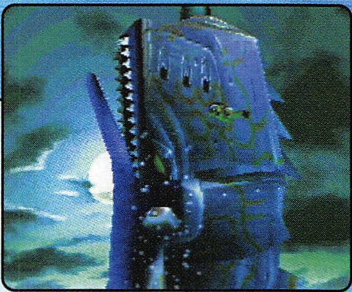




Dragon Valor (Namco) — *Brave Fencer,* move over. *Dragon Valor* is Namco's entry into the hack-n-slash RPG genre. Expect typical Namco CG brilliance, as well.

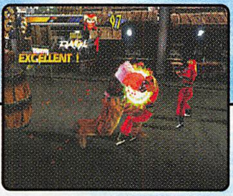






Alundra 2 (Activision) — RPG lovers are going to go chapter 11 this year. *Alundra 2* is the sequel to the highly-underrated RPG of the same name. Too bad 2D's been replaced by 3D in this outing.

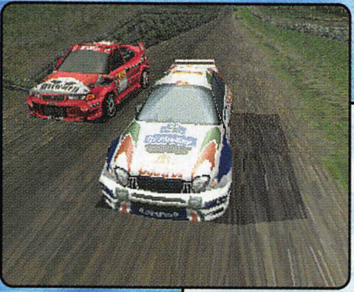


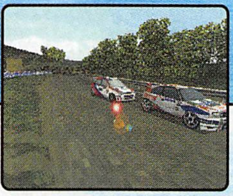



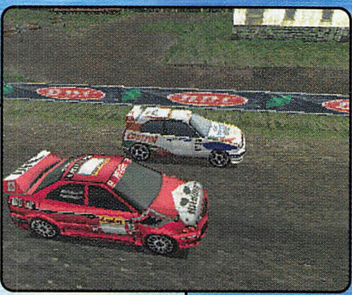




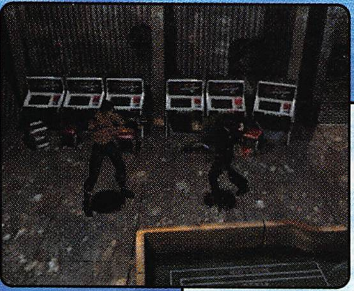
Gekido (Interplay) — Another PlayStation beat-'em-up? At least *Gekido's* saving grace is developer Gremlin (*Loaded* and *Reloaded*).

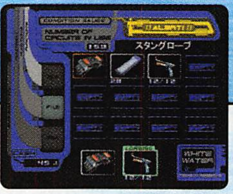
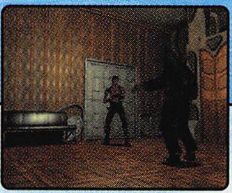
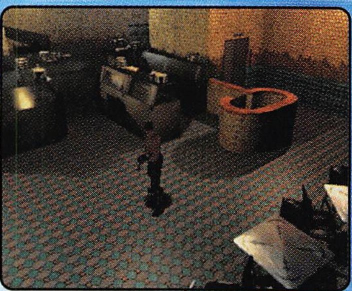






International Rally Racing (Konami) — Grab your helmet, gloves and a barf bag, 'cause out of control Rally racing is heading to the PS nearest you, courtesy of Konami. Real rally vehicles make their way through famed rally courses around the globe... but no Pike's Peak?

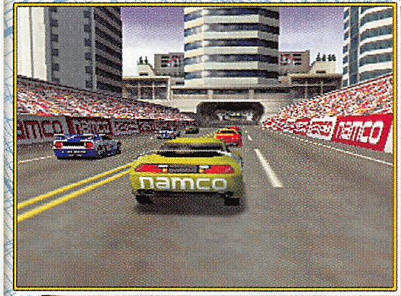


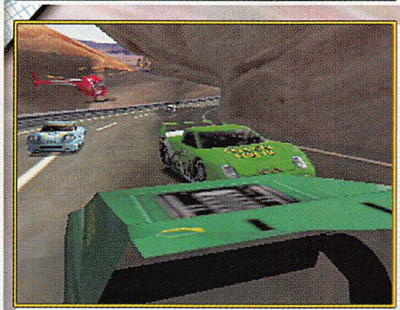




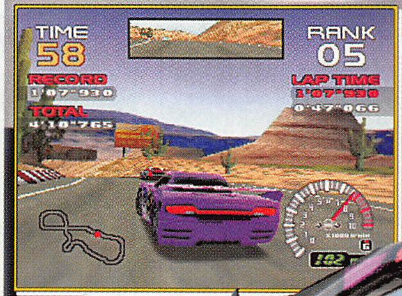
Countdown Vampires (Bandai) — More Survival Horror for junkies like Eggo. Here's to hoping that *Countdown Vampires* lives up to the improved quality of *Silent Bomber*. Time to stock up on that garlic.


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Ridge Ra



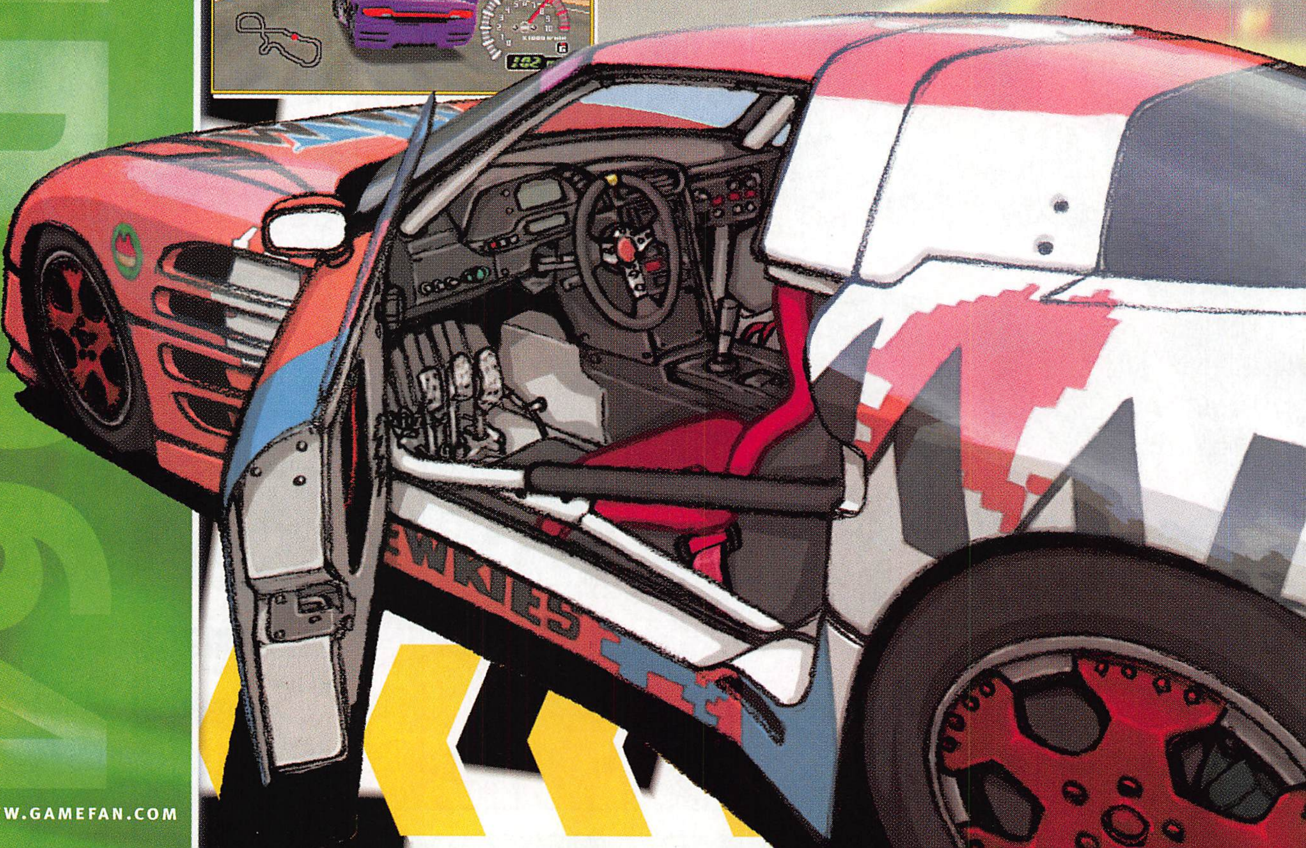


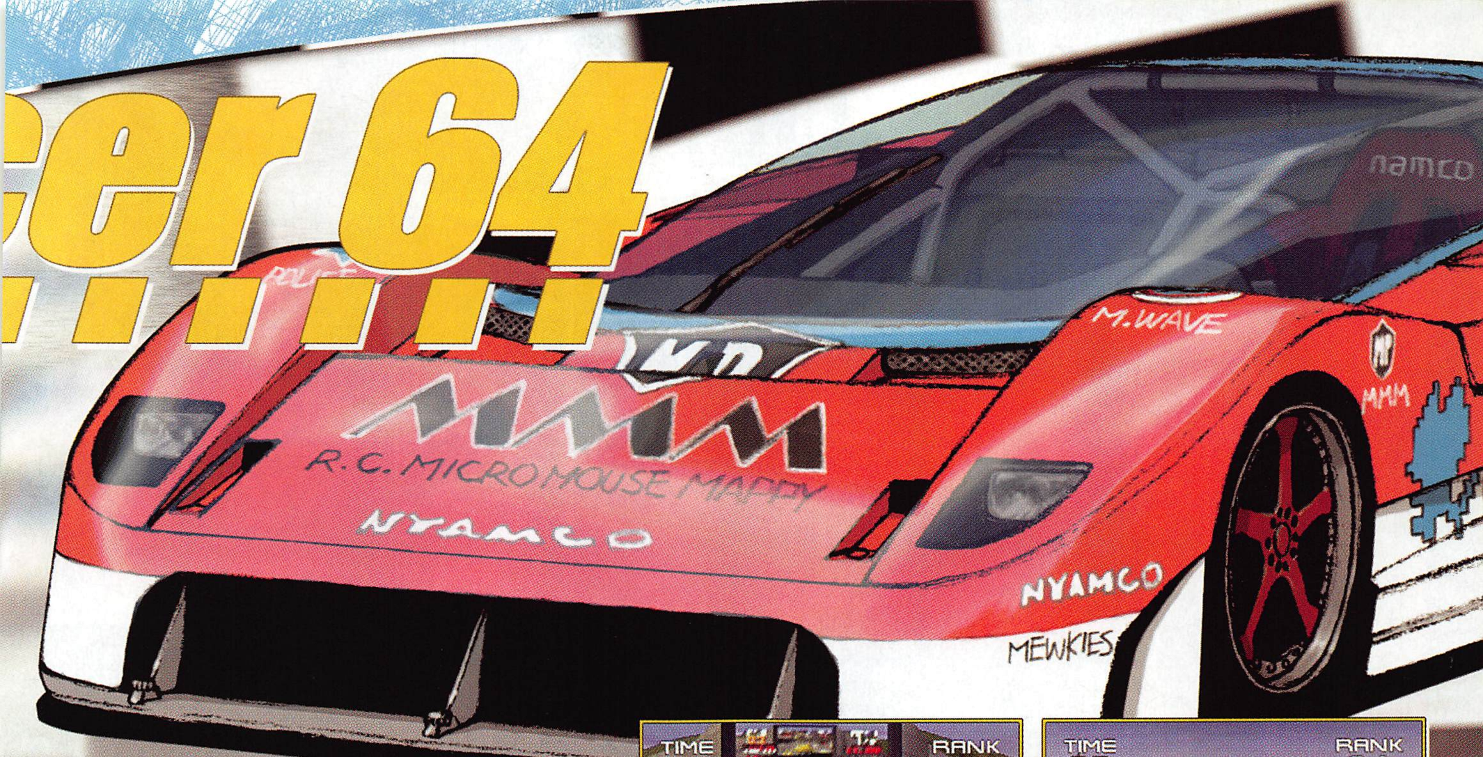


Resident Evil 2, Tony Hawk's Pro Skater, and now *Ridge Racer 64*; this trio joins the few, the proud. Not counting simultaneous releases, few major PlayStation properties have made it to the Fun Machine. It appears that games like *Tomb Raider*, *Spyro*, and even *Final Fantasy* will remain forever confined within the steel walls of Sony. Yet *RE2*, *Tony Hawk*, and *Ridge Racer 64* are doing their part in terms of filling yawning chasms in the N64's über-sparse software library. It's sad... over two dozen racing games, and the system still hasn't gotten it right—that is, until *Ridge Racer 64*.

When *Tony Hawk* appears on the N64, it'll be just over six months since its PS release; it took *RE2* over two years—*Ridge Racer* has them both beat. Three years is many generations in gamedom. Worth the wait? Well, coming from a certified *Ridge Racer* fanatic... "Yes!" Most definitely, yes. It's not often that a game stands the test of time and pulls through with flying colors. Any gamer worth his NeGcon who's played *RR64* would agree.

Not exactly a direct port (I hate that word), *Ridge Racer 64* is an amalgamation of *Ridge Racer*, *Ridge Racer Revolution*, *Rage Racer*, and, yes, *Ridge Racer Type 4*. *RR64* has everything you liked (and probably didn't like) about the series. Eight tracks make up the racing circuit, which carries on the *Ridge Racer* legacy (the first and second tracks are from *Ridge Racer* and *Revolution*, respectively). However, these tracks look radically different from their PlayStation familia. It pains me to admit it, but the N64 blows the PlayStation out of the water with a SCUD-sized missile in this battle. No pixels, no seams, and—I don't know how NST did this—**no** draw-in. Aesthetics aside, each stage is patented *Ridge Racer*, feels like *Ridge Racer*, and plays like *Ridge Racer*. Nintendo Software Technologies must've worked very closely with Nakamura's development crew because the feeling of *déjà vu* is uncanny. *RR64* comes as close to looking like a Dreamcast racer as the



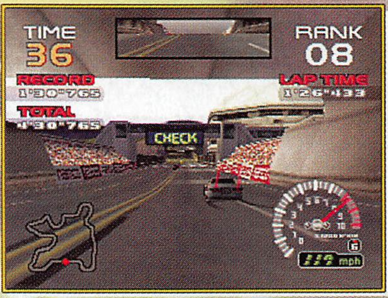


N64 will ever get. *Ridge Racer's* most famous effect, light trails, has been replicated here with stunning, beyond-PS results. Plus, newly-designed car models reflect sunshine and moonlight like never before—can you say reflection mapping and specular highlights? I knew you could!





So it looks better than its now-decrepit ancestors, but how does it play? Good control runs in the family, and *RR64* isn't hindered at all by the cumbersome N64 controller. A powerslide has never been easier to pull off. Analog control has been implemented, but if it's not a NeGcon, I'll use the D-Pad, thank you very much. Anyone with a shred of skill will be happy to see that every racing technique is present and accounted for. Watch out! It's Reubus coming round a corner with a blistering reverse powerslide...



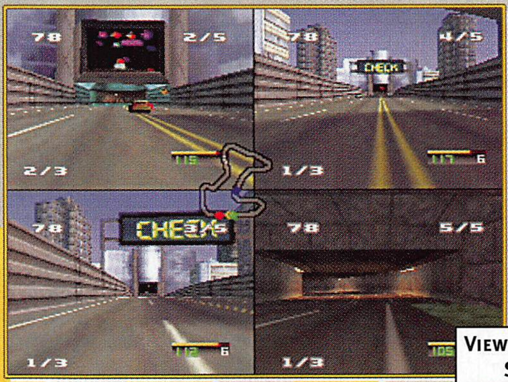
There's nothing like exploring hairpin turns in new tracks with a familiar car. Whether it's the original *Ridge Racer* track or the New Mexico-style track, the surroundings are beautiful. I dare you not to double-take when you see the new highways and byways the newest member of the family has to offer.

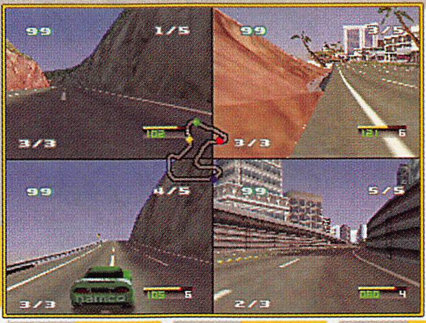
CDs hold a lot of memory and so, apparently, do N64 carts. Retaining that rave music was a challenge in itself, but it's in there. They're not the tracks we've been listening to for half a decade, but they'll do. A bonus side effect of having a cartridge-based *Ridge Racer* is that the obnoxious announcer has a lot less to say. Engines roar, tires burn, suspension bounces, and thankfully, the commentary is much more under control.

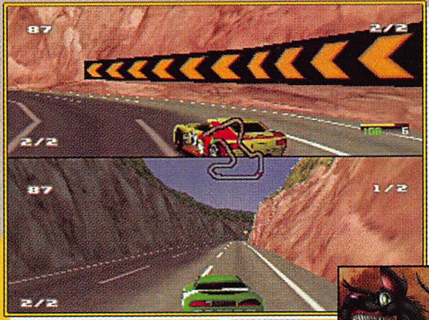


I'm speechless, it's even harder to finish this review because I can't find the words to convey what I'm feeling. This entire review is a miracle in itself, being that I wrote it after a marathon *Ridge Racer* session—I've got racing on the brain right now. *Ridge Racer 64* is a technical feat, and another example that if the full power of the N64 is harnessed, it can spin vicious 64-bit circles around the aging PlayStation. Every nuance and detail from the *Ridge Racer* series (including the secret mirror mode) has been carefully replicated. Scares me to think what *Tekken* would look like on the N64 with an Expansion Pak—dream a little dream with me.

Cerberus used to like powersliding around mall parking lots—until he was pulled over.

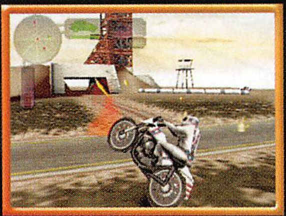


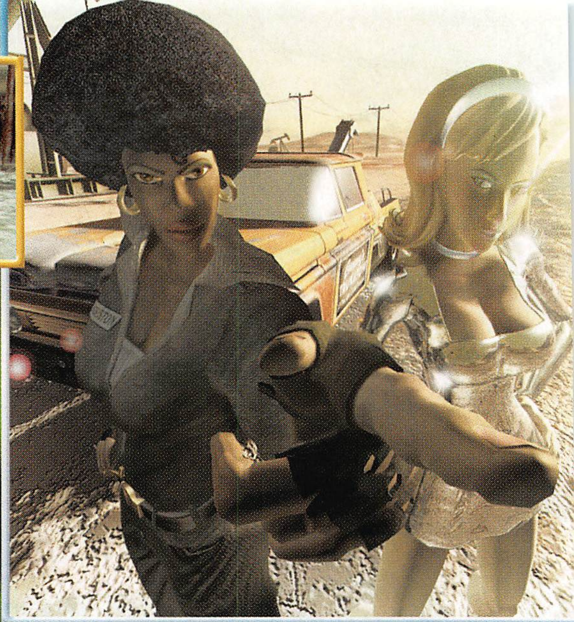
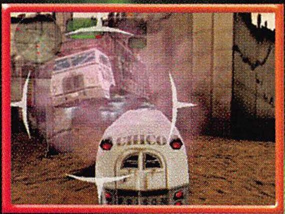


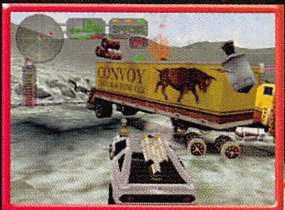




Viewpoint Score: 97	Developer - N.S.T.	1-4 Players	Cerberus: Ridge Racer Type 64	R Review
	Publisher - Nintendo	Available Now		



Ahh, what a joy it is to be among the first of your kind. In the beginning, everything is so fresh and exciting. Fighting games, first person shooters, and car-combat games had a hard-nosed edge at one point. But with each sequel and shoddy spin-off, the impending burnout becomes more and more inevitable. Originality is sadly not a cornerstone of this industry. Which game do you think sold more copies on the PlayStation? *Tomb Raider 3* or *Broken Helix*—and PLEASE don't tell me you thought the latter...

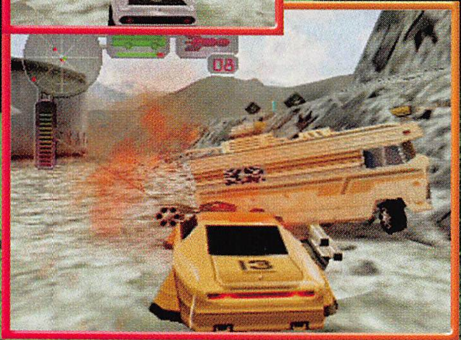
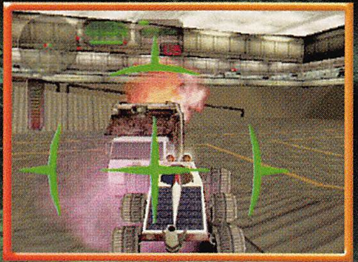
I'd like to see an end to the whole car-combat scene in general. I hate being so blunt, but it's the truth—this genre should never have lasted this long or made the impression it did. Well, at least *Vigilante 8: 2nd Offense* packs quite a wallop and brings a lot of action to the table. Tremendous explosions, mammoth-sized arsenals, freakish characters, cars, and a boatload of upgrades—all making for some brutal combat, which is the genre's sole saving grace.

It's hard to remain enthusiastic when you're reviewing a game that appears on multiple consoles. Obviously N64 carts can't compete with the massive storage space allowed on Dreamcast GD-ROMS, but after playing both *V8* titles, jealousy set in big time. Sure the expansion pack helps, but taking a massive hit in frame-rate (especially when there's a bunch of large vehicles onscreen) gets annoying. For all the graphic hounds out there, I'll say this... *V82O* is one of the sharpest looking N64 games available. In fact, Luxoflux did a damn good job of mimicking the visuals found in the DC rev.

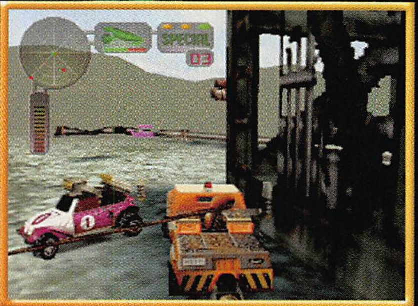
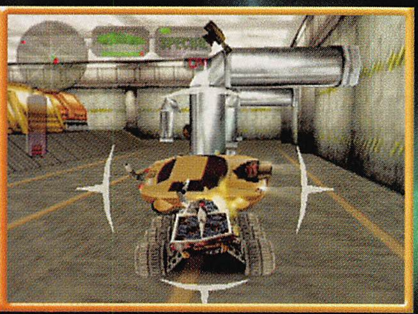
Other than sharper graphics, *V82O* improves upon the original game with more vehicles and stages, all of which feature that wacky *V8* humor. Players can also transform their vehicle on the fly by collecting specific power-ups. The problem is that the control is already way too slippery, and unfortunately it gets even worse with the addition of ski's, hoverjets, etc. on your car. Also, new vehicles like the Moon Trekker (a souped-up Lunar Rover, or as we like to call it, an Extraterrestrial Excavation Device) control terribly. Why throw in cars that you can't remain competitive with? Remember, more doesn't necessarily mean better.

Living in L.A., I've experienced enough road rage and car-combat in my time to fill 10 *V8* sequels. This whole genre has reached critical mass, fueled by the likes of countless *Twisted Metals*, *Rogue Trips*, and vegetable drinks on every console. While I can appreciate a great looking game, I'd also appreciate it if developers opted to try something new for a change.

When Fury bought his new Honda, he opted for the sunroof instead of the flamethrower... bad choice for L.A.

VIGILANTE 8 2ND OFFENSE



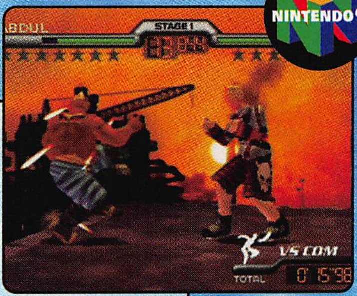
R REVIEW FURY: YOU CALL V8 ROUGH? AH, JUST ANOTHER DAY ON THE L.A. FREEWAYS...	DEVELOPER - LUXOFLUX	1-4 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 74
	PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	AVAILABLE NOW	

Coming Soon

Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon Coming Soon



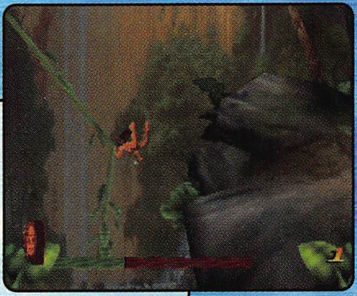




Fighter's Destiny (Genki) — This might not have the weight of a *Street Fighter*, but compared to the likes of *Deadly Arts*, it's easily one of the best N64 fighters around. The sequel brings more to the table, with additional characters, improved graphics, and a wealth of new moves.

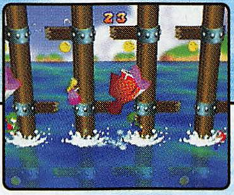
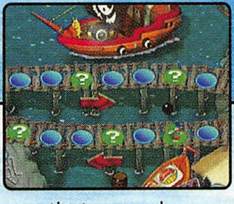
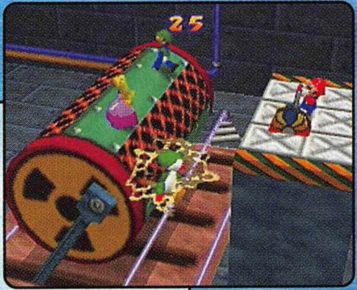






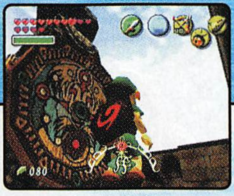
Tarzan (Activision) — A port of the awesome PlayStation platformer and one of the most impressive Disney-movie-to-game adaptations yet. If you were a fan of the film, you'll be pleased to hear the game does it justice!



Mario Party 2 (Nintendo) — Having proven that a good multi-player game doesn't need tight corridors and AK-47s, *Mario Party* returns with a slew of challenging new mini- games. But no new characters... weak sauce!

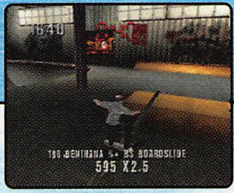
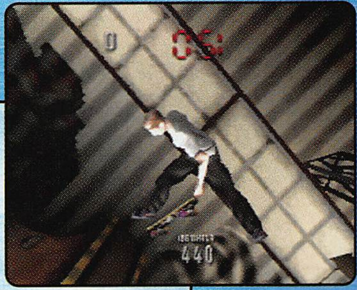






Zelda Gaiden (Nintendo) — *Zelda OOT*, the most anticipated N64 game of all time, delivered the goods and then some! A sequel of sorts, *Zelda Gaiden* could easily be Miyamoto's final N64 master-piece... until we get *Zelda* on the Dolphin? Can I get an Amen?



Tony Hawk's Pro Skater (Activision) — N64 owners should be thanking their lucky stars that this unbelievable, thrill-a-second skating sim is heading to the fun machine. Being an analog game, *THPS64* should control as well, if not better than the PS rev.

Dreamcast

Reviews



Preview









When the original *Sega Rally* came out on Saturn, I was completely caught off guard... good 3D on the Saturn? Confusion swelled in my head. This was supposed to be the PlayStation's realm, not that of Sega's 32-bit, 2D-luvin' Saturn. *Rally* was a testament to great programming, as the home version is still respected as one of the best console racers ever crafted. It's fitting that the only game to oust *Rally* from its turbo-charged throne is the sequel.

I'll start by saying this—if you're a racing fanatic and own a Dreamcast, you'd be absolutely insane not to buy *Rally 2*. It is the most realistic, fun, and gorgeous home racer I've ever played. To this day (and remember, I've owned an import DC since November of '98), I continue to play my import version of *Rally 2*. In fact, only Genki's brilliant *Tokyo Extreme Racer* can compete (visually, mind you) with AM2's arcade masterpiece. As far as gameplay is concerned however, there can only be one (in my best Connor MacLeod voice)!

Included in *Rally 2* are two main modes of play—Arcade and 10 Year Championship. Arcade allows players to race on four tracks, exactly as it appeared in—you guessed it—your local arcade. But, the real fun comes in the 10 Year Championship mode. Here, drivers have the opportunity to unlock new cars and make any necessary adjustments to their steering, suspension, brakes, tire type, and even gear ratio before a race. Varying weather conditions can also be expected, so if you're only familiar with arcade play, better get practicing. The learning curve in *Rally 2* is as steep as a Pike's Peak hill climb.

If you're not familiar with rally racing, you can certainly see its appeal: fast cars meet out-of-control, hand-glued-to-the-"e"-brake steering. But believe it or not, I've encountered a number of people (both in office and the gaming community) who complain that rally racing simply pales in comparison to your standard *Gran Turismo*-like racer. This could not be further from the truth. I can understand why folks would be put off by the learning curve (hey, anybody can wipe out... but to do it in style!). But give it a fair amount of play and you'll see that each turn—regardless of how impossible it appears—can be taken with the greatest of ease and precision. Just hang in there and keep practicing... god knows I had to!











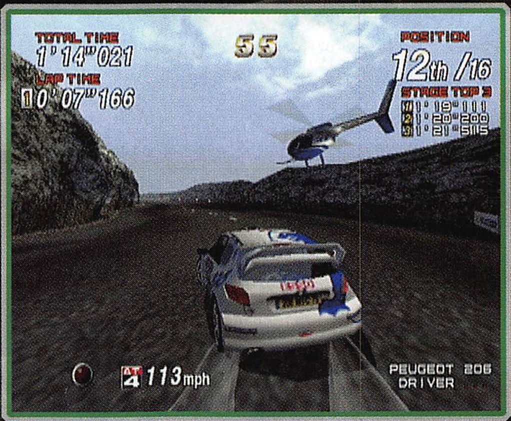
Unlike the original *Sega Rally,* which sported only three vehicles, the sequel has quite the stable. Subaru, Mitsubishi, Peugeot, Toyota, Fiat, Lancia, Renault S... enough makes and models to satisfy racing enthusiasts worldwide. Gone, however, is the entire Ford lineup, which is puzzling considering it's an American manufacturer that was present in the Japanese version. The Peugeot 106 has also been excluded, while the Peugeot 206 and Fiat Sceicent have been added.

SEGA RALLY 2
SEGA RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP™

Though the domestic version of *Rally 2* was rumored to run at a constant 60 fps (don't ya just love online newsgroups?), it definitely does not. While it's more consistent through turns, it's still far from a silky-smooth 60 frames. Guess what, folks? I didn't care then and I don't care now. If at any time your experience with *Rally 2* is actually hindered by the inconsistent frame-rate, put down your DC pad and walk over to the nearest mirror. What you see before you is an all too common illness in our industry—jaded gamer syndrome. I'm sorry, your opinions can no longer be considered rational.

Sega Rally 2 is a grade "A" Dreamcast title and one of the most impressive home racers of all time. It's that simple. It deserves a spot in any gamer's DC collection, sitting alongside the great ones: *Sonic Adventure, Soul Calibur,* and *House of the Dead 2.* Even without online play, *Rally 2* will satisfy players for the long haul. Just avoid steering wheel peripherals and make for the checkered flag.

Fury would love to race his Honda on a nice dirt track, but that might get it dirty.









Viewpoint Score :97	Developer - Sega	1-2 Players	Fury: 60, 30, 20
	Publisher - Sega	Available Now	frames and counting.

Review

Dreamcast

While everyone considers *Worms: Armageddon* the productivity killer of the month, my little demon comes in the form of *Zombie Revenge* on the Dreamcast. Between the sea of name changes (*Blood Bullet: House of the Dead Side Story* among them) and countless delays, I've somehow managed to retain my sanity (if you can possibly call living, eating, and sleeping *GameFan* sane). Yeah it's been a bumpy ride, but as I sit here watching the demo of the completed version of *ZR*, I'm reminded of one very important thing—I love Sega arcade games!

While the DC dazzles some and disappoints others, you've got to love the fact that arcade-to-home ports can finally be done perfectly. Take, for example, *Zombie Revenge*. Visually, you'd be crazy to say that it didn't mimic (even down to the smallest pixel) the arcade piece. Everything appears completely intact: bosses, lighting effects, weapons—it's all just the way it appeared in your local arcade. But, since most arcades sadly failed to stock Sega's dark gem, you'll just have to take my word for it.

How could you hate a game that allows you to impale the living dead with a huge electric drill? *ZR* is the ultimate weapon-driven beat-'em-up to ever hit a console. Disturbing images galore, precise control, tons of devilish moves, and enough godly visuals to impress even the biggest skeptics (yes Eggo, even you can enjoy this one). There's simply no way you can pass on this game. Imagine taking *Resident Evil*, tossing aside the puzzle and text elements, tripling the enemy and weapon count, and there you have it—*Zombie Revenge*. If you own a DC, put down this issue right now and head to the nearest game store. And if you have to, sell *Pen Pen* and *Mortal Kombat Gold* to get it (I know it'll just break your heart to part with 'em).

As good as *ZR* is, its main flaw is that the game is way too short. I don't expect my action games to encompass multiple GD-ROMs or have 50 different endings (or even a good one at that), but I expect it to be long enough to create a real challenge. Like *HotD2*, the action in *ZR* is non-stop, but the game itself only spans seven unique levels (if you count the final boss). Is it wrong to want more? Listen up Sega, from here on out, if you're considering making improvements to an already great game, touch on its weaknesses instead of throwing in a "Vs." mode or boss mode. Can't games just remain true to a single play mode these days? No more extras like dating sims (sorry Kodomo), "Vs." play, or other goodies. Beef up the game, folks... not the option screen.

Though I'm itching to play another *HotD* gun game (then again there is *Biohazard Gunsurvivor* on the PS), I'm still extremely impressed with *ZR*. While the DC may be the haven for shoddy PC ports, once in a great while, when all the planets and Dangoheads align, a game will come along which turns both heads and stomachs at the same time. Enjoy the blood bath!

As a child, Fury was told not to believe in monsters... Then he discovered the Mullet...







ZOMBIE REVENGE™

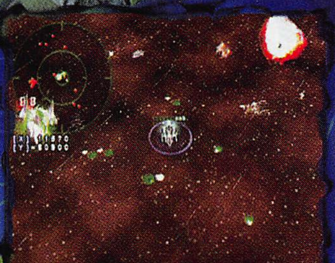




REVIEW FURY: ZED'S DEAD, BABY... ZED'S DEAD.	DEVELOPER - SEGA PUBLISHER - SEGA	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE : 97

Many of our scientists classify the ARMADA as hostile aliens with whom we might form treaties once we can determine their language and motives...







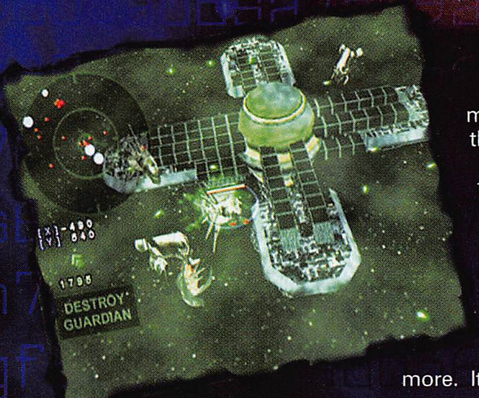
There's a load of games that I've stumbled upon and played in my short time on this planet. *Battletoads Arcade* is one, *Rabbit Punch* is another. Other games haven't necessarily been arcade games or all that rare, just hidden away in the shadows. *FireFight* is at the top of that list because no one gave it the time of day. Released by Epic Games, *FireFight* was a single and multi-player PC shooter with pristine, pre-rendered 2D graphics and great control—the keyboard handled weapons and movement, while aiming was done with the mouse. I had a lot of fun with this $30 shooter and to this day still play it on my laptop. It probably wasn't suited for the PC crowd, kinda like a *Nuclear Strike* after intense Arnold Schwarzenegger-like bodybuilding. Someone at Metro 3D must've seen *FireFight* as well, because *Armada* has that same feel, sans keyboard and mouse.

Let's get past the pretense on Metro's part that *Armada* is an RPG—because it's not. Sure, *Armada* does have role-playing elements, but nothing to write home about. If an uneventful story and ship upgrades warrant calling a game an RPG, then so be it. Even so, *Armada* has nothing on the real RPGs of the world. I see this as being a shooter with some unique stuff thrown in to occupy our time.

Lemme address something that I think everyone in the cave noticed. From looks alone, *Armada* could pass for a PC game, and maybe that's why *Armada* reminds me so much of *FireFight*. Anyone that's played his or her share of PC games knows what I'm talking about. From the very first planet to the final galaxy, *Armada* has that shiny PC look. Metro3D must've put *Armada* together with Windows CE or a software development kit. Not that this looks bad, just deceiving; I kept looking for my keyboard and mouse.

"Each day we remain on Earth increases the probability that the human race will cease to exist. If we honor our ancestors, we must surge outward from our birthplace and populate the universe. The journey to space is the quest for life everlasting."
--President Sarah McAllister, EarthGov, 3092 A.D.

ARMADA



Navigating around is easy enough. The shoulder buttons act as boost and turbo and the thumb stick orients the ship in the desired direction. Physics are reminiscent of *Asteroids*, with the ship drifting to varying degrees after a thrust. What's a bummer is it only takes five minutes to learn how to fly the ship. Avoiding enemies comes down to just flying past the swarm.

In the end I'm left with a game that winds up being very monotonous. What's weird is that I didn't stop playing right away. Okay, okay, I didn't stop playing until about eight or nine hours later, but that's beside the point. There's something to be said about *Armada*, but I can't help thinking there could've been more. It's not really a shooter, it's not really an RPG; there's always *Giga Wing* <gag>.

Cerberus spends entirely too much time talking about playing games on his "laptop."

VIEWPOINT SCORE :81	DEVELOPER - METRO 3D	1-4 PLAYERS	CERBERUS: I AM THE
	PUBLISHER - METRO 3D	AVAILABLE NOW	LAST STARFIGHTER!

R REVIEW





SLAVE ZERO

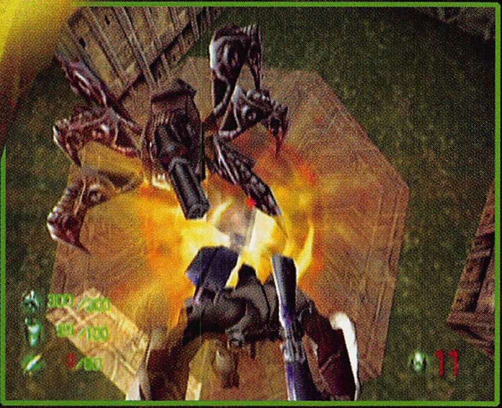


Regardless of how tall my hand-drawn alter ego may appear, I'm just 5'6". I know that's short... no doubt about it. Perhaps that's why there's always been a special place in my heart (though my parents call me emotionally bankrupt) for games that allowed me to take on a much larger persona. *Rampage*, *Godzilla Generations* (OK, maybe that one to a much lesser extent), *King of the Monsters,* and *Slave Zero*—all titles that let me wreak ultimate havoc on a wee helpless city. For those all too brief moments, I was the biggest and strongest around... yes, I was finally the bully.

That's really the best way to describe playing *Slave Zero.* All the environments are made to scale, so once setting out aboard that giant mech, you're the king of the hour. Cars, people, lightposts... everything appears so small. And guess what? It is. In fact, the only thing really larger than yourself are the enormous skyscrapers that litter the Neo Tokyo-esque city you're attempting to save.

While from most angles (visually and thematically) *SZ* appears a solid 3rd-person shooter, it's not without its flaws. Namely, I took issue with the mission objectives. They're simply too mundane to keep my interest for long. Wipe out a slew of mechs, blow up a few generators or ships, proceed... Doesn't exactly grab ya does it? Thing is, *SZ* looks really awesome from a distance. If you only got a chance to see it or play it very briefly (at a local retailer for instance), you'd think I was absolutely crazy for thinking the game gets boring at times. But after an extended session behind the controls, you'll understand my point exactly. Levels, enemies, play mechanics—they all just look and feel way too similar.

Finally, I must mention the frame-rate. It often struggles to remain consistent, and when you're surrounded by a number of mechs, the game becomes a lesson in tedium and patience. It's tough to remain nimble when the frame-rate has difficulty keeping up with the action. Thankfully, the multi-player section, at least in two player mode, has been blessed with a decent if not slightly impressive frame-rate (compared to 4-player anyway). Then again, this could be attributed to the fact that in multi-play your field of view is limited to 1st person only. Not to mention, the levels lose quite a bit of that graphic charm. Oh well, take what you can get...



While *Slave Zero* certainly looks exciting at first glance, it unfortunately tires rather quickly. If it's a mech title you're after, try contacting the nearest import shop... now what was Dango mumbling? Something about loot?

Fury's been late to work quite often lately, 'cause he lost the step-ladder he uses to tie his shoes.

REVIEW			
FURY: SLAVE ZERO TO SLAVE ONE... I NEED A RIDE OUTTA HERE!	DEVELOPER - INFOGRAMES PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE THIS DATE	VIEWPOINT SCORE :79







Last year at E3, the Dreamcast was the highlight of the show. But wanting to catch a glimpse of the **entire** DC lineup, I searched high and low for the lesser known titles, looking for a diamond in the rough. Passing by Crave's booth, I spotted out of the corner of my eye (must've had my DC radar on full power) *Draconus: Cult of the Wyrm*. Though it was extremely early, *Draconus* showed promise as the first Dreamcast Action/RPG. Reminiscent of Mindscape's *Soul Fighter*, it boasted a well-balanced mix of hack-'n-slash gameplay and RPG elements (such as leveling up and a well-crafted story).

Long, long ago... dragons terrorized the land. Until the fifth child of a king (who was also a fifth child) decided to rid the land of these winged beasts once and for all. In honor of his gallant deeds, every child born of the same lineage (just how many royal fifth childs of a fifth child can there be!?) carried the name "Dragonsbane." The only problem was dragons had long since disappeared from the land, leaving the title Dragonsbane to mean... well, not a whole lot. But to keep these once-proud warriors busy, various kingdoms sent them on dangerous missions. Now, as evil forces attempt to wreak havoc again, the warriors Cynric and Aeowyn (both Dragonsbanes existing in parallel universes) have vowed to restore peace to the land. With over 30-40 different enemy types and 15 huge levels to explore, *Draconus* should prove more challenging than your typical Dreamcast adventure... quick, Sonic, bump Dr. Robotnick on the head three times!

Other than the story, *Draconus* also features some stunning visuals. Both of the selectable fighters and many of the enemies are comprised of many, many polygons and the detail level is up there with the DC's best titles. As well, the atmosphere is worth noting. When the game starts, you explore an Elven village that rests high atop the trees, hundreds of feet above the ground...can you say Ewok Village? Yet this forest is only the first of many locales to explore; vast swamplands and mountain ranges hide many secrets and mystical spells to attain. The character Aeowyn relies far more on magic attacks than her counterpart Cynric—he's more of the sword slashing meathead-type.

Draconus is still a ways from being released and a good deal of tweaking (notably, the frame rate needs some work) is still in order. Treyarch might not have the DC's equivalent of *Zelda* here, but *Draconus* is nevertheless shaping up to be a solid adventure. And did I mention it's not a port of a PC game? Hooray! **F**













DRACONUS

Developer - Treyarch	1-4 Players	FURY: Hey, George Takei's
Publisher - Crave	Available 1st Qtr.	gotta work, people...

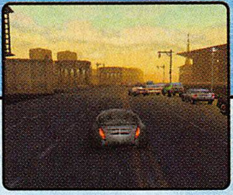
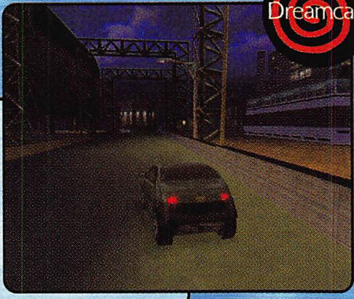
P PREVIEW

COMING SOON

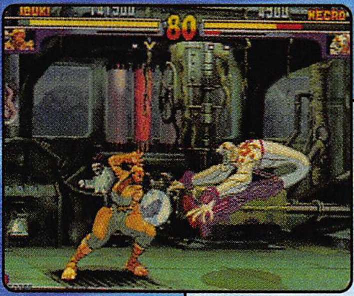
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Dreamcast



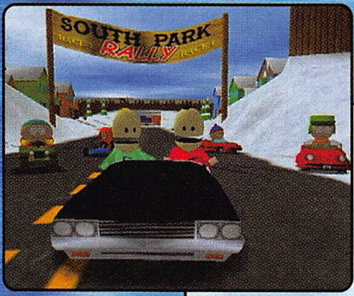
Felony Pursuit (THQ) — Tired of your typical Dreamcast racers? Why not assume the role of an up-and-coming thug looking to gain a bit of respect with the mob? Or how about a police recruit off to prove he's the number one gun?

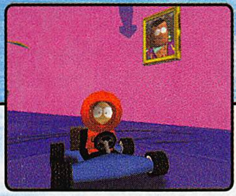
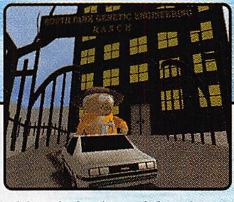






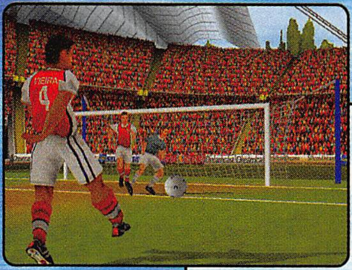
Street Fighter III W Impact (Capcom) — Taking into account how well *Alpha 3* turned out on DC, let's hope that *SFIII* follows suit as well. Expect a number of added options, possibly even an art gallery... Bengus is simply the best!



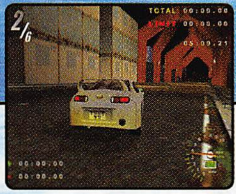


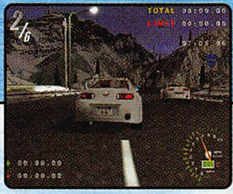
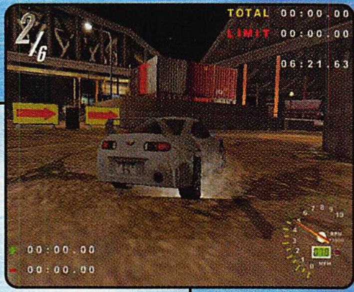
South Park Rally (Acclaim) — It's about time the DC got a humorous cart racer. Kyle, Kenny, Stan, Cartman, and a number of other South Park freaks make an appearance in the oddest cart racer this side of the Rockies.



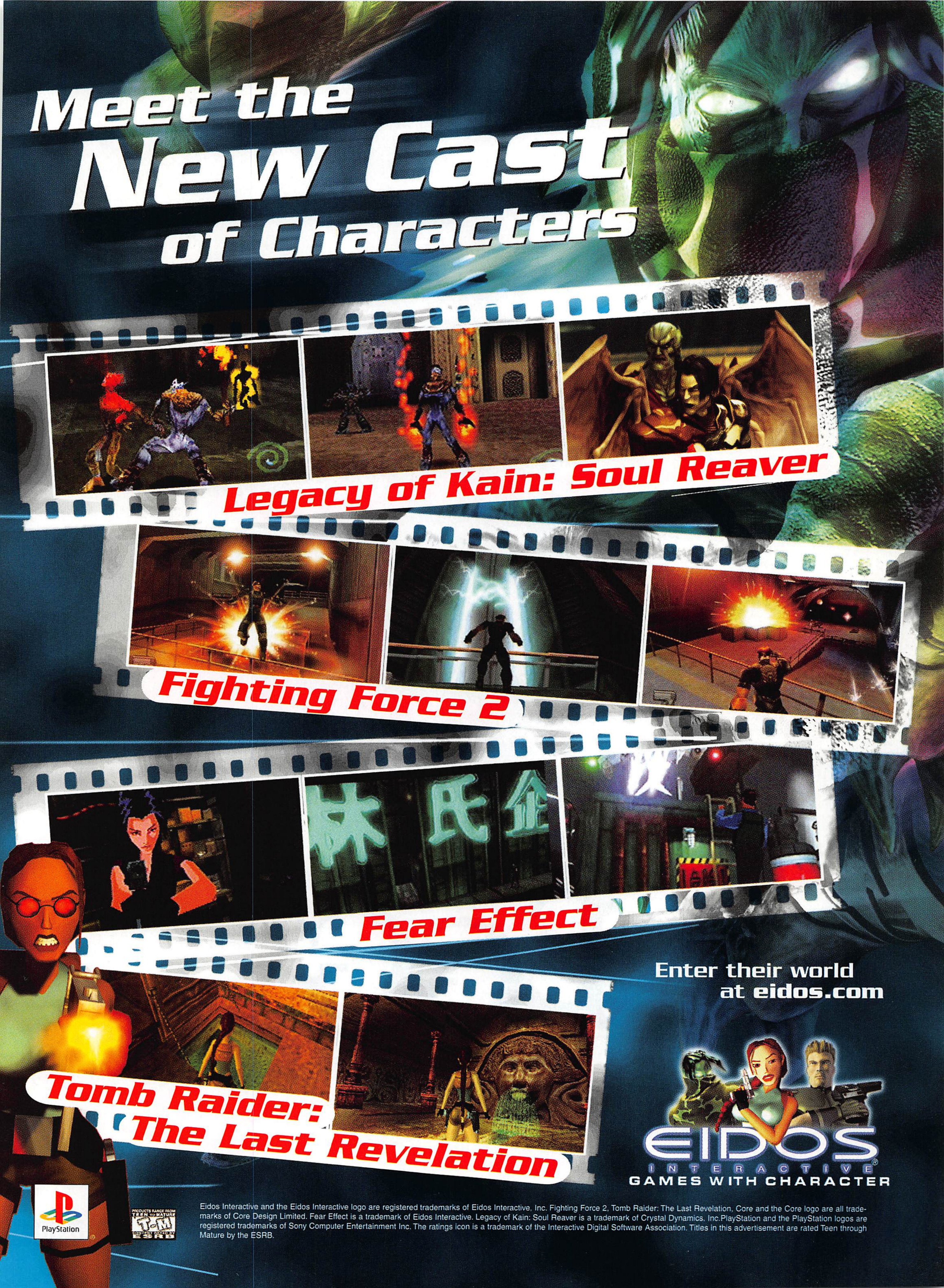



Worldwide Soccer 2000 (Sega) — Kodomo and other soccer fans will be in heaven this year with amazing 'football' titles like *Virtua Striker* and *Worldwide Soccer*. Time to invest in a pair of shin guards, and of course ya can't forget the orange slices... GOAL!

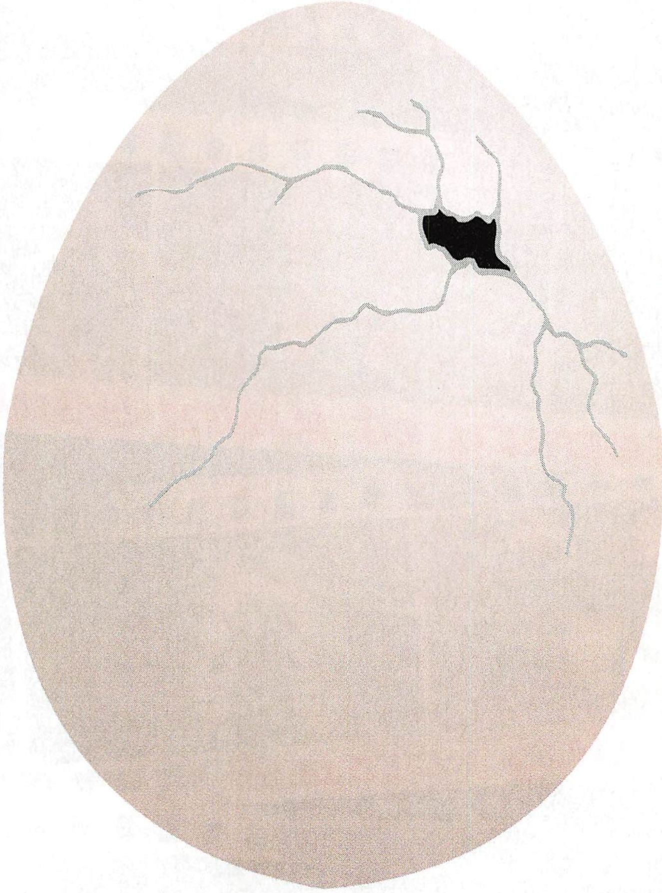



Midnight GT (Rage) — The creators of *Expendable* are set to deliver another adrenaline-soaked experience with *Midnight GT*. Tear it up on Japan's city streets or test your true skills on some deadly, open Rally courses.



Meet the New Cast of Characters
Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver
Fighting Force 2
Fear Effect
Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation
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Symptoms of Fear:

Perspiration

Dilation of Pupils

Trembling

Nausea

Loss of Appetite

Dry Mouth



Remember, the only thing to fear is fear itself. Especially in this deadly mercenary mission where your own emotional responses determine what happens next. So go ahead, make your move. Just be sure to keep your fear in check.

Europa

Upon a time, Europe was known as the 'Dark Continent' to American gamers: after playing through countless horrid Euro PC and Amiga titles, many really took to heart the old European adage "all sizzle, no substance" on our side of the 'pond.' However, with developers such as Rare, DMA Design, Factor 5, Psygnosis, and Bizarre Creations shedding their dubious pasts of beautiful but lackluster games, Europe is now a hotbed of game-creating talent. With that in mind, we present to you a reinvigorated Europa; one that will give insight into the world of Euro games and developers. Brought to you monthly by ace European correspondent, Riot, our Finnish friend will bring you all the latest news, interviews, and in-depth info on all the latest and hottest console goings-on overseas. So without further ado, welcome to Europa: EuroNation GameWare Generation 2 (EGG2).

lost toys

There's something strange going on in Guildford, that much we know. Guildford is a small town in the London area that has an extremely high concentration of top-notch developers—and scientists somewhere in the world must be trying to figure out why. Besides the legendary Bullfrog Productions, Lionhead, Mucky Foot, Criterion, Glass Ghost, Big Blue Box, and Lost Toys all call Guildford home.

On a side note, I'd like to mention that after catching a glimpse of EA/Bullfrog's new custom-built studio, complete with outdoor soccer field, I think that the dreaded EA influence cannot be all that bad. Then again, while I was gazing at the complex, I was surrounded by German journalists who were busy guzzling down some fine champagne courtesy of a big, un-named French publisher, and my memories of that event aren't entirely clear... but that's a different (and embarrassing) story.

Getting back to Guildford... Peter Molyneux's Bullfrog Productions was what kick-started it all back in the '80s, when pop music was still good. Now, almost all the small development teams in Guildford have been formed by ex-Bullfrog employees who, along with Peter Molyneux, didn't like the influence EA had over Bullfrog and decided to do something about it. For those that don't know, Electronic Arts bought Bullfrog quite a few years back and made some changes.

After Molyneux left Bullfrog to set up Lionhead Studios, Mucky Foot followed suit shortly thereafter. The team with the dirty feet has finished its first game called *Urban Chaos*, which is for the PC and PlayStation. The Big Blue Box is another brand new Bullfrog offshoot, but it's the trio called the Lost Toys that I'm going to drop science on in this installment of Europa.

The Lost Toys were formed not long after Mike Diskett set up Mucky Foot. The three people who make up the team have more experience combined than many other large-scale developers. Glenn Corpes is the man who has clocked the most work experience, having been at Bullfrog for 11 years as a lead programmer. Glenn has worked on every Bullfrog title you can imagine, but a few highlights include *Populous*, *Magic Carpet*, and *Syndicate Wars*. One down, two more to go. Darran Thomas was the lead artist on Bullfrog's *Theme Park 2*, and during his four years there, he has also contributed to *Hi-Octane* (an excellent *Wipeout*-ish racing game) and *Dungeon Keeper*. Last but not least, there's programmer Jeremy Longley, who worked together with Darran on a secret Bullfrog title, along with other promising games like *Creation*, which was canned when EA stepped into the mix.

Leaving behind an established development group and setting up your own isn't easy, but the Lost Toys had help from Les Edgar who set up Bullfrog with Peter Molyneux. At the moment, the Lost Toys are working feverishly on their debut game for the PC, with console versions to come. Expect plenty more sizzlin' info on the Lost Toys in the future.

GameFan doesn't generally do interviews about games that can't be talked about since they're so early in development, but this time we make an exception since the boys at Lost Toys have got plenty to say.

GF: Why did you and the other members of Lost Toys leave Bullfrog?
Lost Toys: The three of us had similar problems with some of the things that happened at Bullfrog and similar ideas about how certain games should be done. We realized that we all wanted the same thing—creative control and the freedom to experiment with unique ideas—so we decided there was only one way that could happen, and that was to form our own team.

GF: Was it a daunting task setting up your own team?
Lost Toys: Very; none of us had any real idea what it was like to run a company, although Les (Edgar, co-founder of Bullfrog) obviously helped a lot. I had vague, distant memories of what it was like to deal with publishers from the early days of Bullfrog, but things have changed over the years. It's also been harder than we hoped to find good people.

GF: What do you gain by going at it on your own?
Lost Toys: I worked at Bullfrog, watching it grow from five people to 140... and I missed the atmosphere of the early days. Trying to get back that feeling was a factor for me, and surprisingly, it's worked. Maybe not 100%, but I think we'd have to cram ourselves into one small, leaky room over a shop to achieve the full effect. Now, if we want to do something, we only have to justify it to ourselves and our publishers, rather than several layers of management.

GF: How long have you guys been involved in the game business?
Glenn: Twelve years professionally, but I started programming seven years before that and wanted to write games after just a few weeks of learning. I've just realized that next September I'll have been programming for 20 years!
Jez: I've been playing around with computers since I was a kid, but professionally I've been involved in games for four years.
Darran: It was something I got into straight after university, so that's been about six years now.

GF: Lost Toys is quite a small team... do you think that small teams can still produce games in a reasonable time frame?
Lost Toys: If they pick the right games. We have to be realistic. There are games out there with teams of 70 artists producing amazing, story-driven RPGs. We have to realize we can't—and don't want to—do that type of game yet.

GF: Is state of the art technology important to you, or do you think games with strong gameplay can still stand out from the crowd, even if they don't sport the latest 3D engine and effects?

Lost Toys: Possibly. But that's not what we are trying to do. The term "state of the art" suggests the best use of established technology to me, but there is no way we are going to go head-to-head with the best RTS engines. There are a million and one ways of using modern hardware. It only takes a little lateral thinking to do something new that exists outside the 'state of the art' but is not in its shadow.

GF: Usually developers embrace new technology with open arms, but do you think the speed at which PC 3D card technology is evolving is frustrating for developers? Will they move on to work with console hardware, which is typically stable for at least 3-5 years?
Lost Toys: Now that the API wars have settled down and all hardware supports the same basic set of blend functions, the only real difference between one machine and the next will be speed. Graphics are all about algorithms, not hardware. The PC is the ideal platform to work on for graphic technology; the 2X+ speed increase every year simply means that there will always be something new—just entering the realm of the possibility—and scalability had better be a part of your plan.

GF: This brings us to PlayStation 2... what does Lost Toys think of the machine?
Lost Toys: An awesome piece of hardware for the money; it will undoubtedly be the main platform for several years. The PC will be more powerful by the time it's released though.

GF: Will your first game be in the same genres as Bullfrog's other titles?
Lost Toys: No.

GF: Do you intend to keep Lost Toys as a small team or will you expand into a bigger team in the future?
Lost Toys: We intend to expand, but slowly, as some of our ideas need bigger teams. The key is not to do it too quickly.

GF: Why do you think there is such a massive concentration of high-class developers in Guildford?
Lost Toys: Entirely due to Bullfrog. Firstly, because of what Bullfrog was, it attracted a lot of the best people in the country to Guildford. Secondly, because of what Bullfrog became...

Riot's completely unofficial list of cool PlayStation 2 games in development in Europe

Since all developers working on the PlayStation 2 have signed NDAs more confusing than Rodman & Electra's marriage agreement, they can't talk about their plans just yet; so it's difficult to know exactly what each developer is working on. After much digging around and many sneaky meetings in places darker than Posty's cave, I have managed to compile a list of the most interesting developments underway... yes folks, nothing here is confirmed, but all the information came from reliable sources.

Lionhead
Considered one of the world's best developers despite the fact that it has yet to release a game, Lionhead was one of the first developers outside of Japan to receive PS2 development kits, and a separate R&D team is working on the machine. It is known that Peter Molyneux has already designed Lionhead's next game, and it will most likely be for PlayStation 2, but they have to finish *Black and White* first, which is set for an early 2000 release.

Free Radical Design
The team made up of ex-*GoldenEye* developers is getting us all worked up about the PS2... Visions of *GoldenEye* mixed with *Half-Life* are just the tip of the iceberg... FRD has a development deal with Eidos, but details on the game are scarce to say the least.

Evolution Studios
Started up by industry veterans Martin Kenwright (founder of Digital Image Design) and Ian Hetherington (the driving force behind Psygnosis early on), Evolution Studios is dedicated to the PlayStation 2. Evolution certainly lives up to its name, as this is not going to be your average developer. Already deals have been signed with Oscar-winning, top CGI teams and experienced writers. Of course, who gives a toss if the game is gonna be as fun as *The English Patient*, right?

Rage Software
It's a sure bet that whenever new hardware is around, Rage Software is there to support it. Already confirmed for PS2 is *Wild Wild Racing*, which is being developed by Rage in conjunction with Japanese publisher Imagineer. Rage is also rumored to have at least two other PS2 games in the pipeline.

Reflections
With *Driver* already establishing itself as a viable franchise, it's a sure bet that a PS2 version is on its way. Reflections has been hiring programmers and artists to work on the PlayStation 2, which certainly says a lot about the company's future plans... *Steam* is a title that Reflections has been developing for quite some time—a steam-punk adventure game.

Argonaut Software
Argonaut might be buddies with Sega, as it's one of the 1.5 Sega developers in Europe. But knowing the company and director Jez San's thirst for new technology, it's a sure bet that Argonaut is working on something for PlayStation 2. The on-again/off-again project *Kanaan* has finally been cancelled. But it is known that a third *Starglider* game (the series which made Argonaut famous) is in the planning stages. It'll be on a next-generation machine which could very well be the PlayStation 2.



Psygnosis
A no-brainer, this one, since Psygnosis is a part of Sony now. Early in the year, rumors suggested a *Colony Wars* game was being designed for the PlayStation 2, but so far nothing has been confirmed. At ECTS '99, the producers of *Wipeout 3* hinted that a new version was in the works for the PS2, but with a certain twist... what that is we don't know yet.

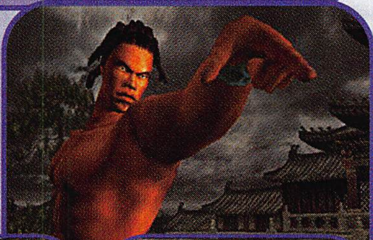
Elixir
A team led by *Theme Park* co-designer Demis Hassabis is working on a high-end PC title called *Republic*, which is hotly tipped as coming out for PlayStation 2. Frankly, that is the only platform that can handle this ambitious strategy title. Question is, are console players really interested in taking part in political shenanigans—which is what *Republic* is about?

Criterion
Another developer located in Guildford, Criterion created the Dreamcast hoverboard game *Trickstyle*, a version of which is in development for PlayStation 2—this is rumored to be a new version using the characters from the current *Trickstyle*. Considering that Criterion's RenderWare is the 3D renderer of choice in the PS2 devkit, it's highly possible that Criterion will have a title ready for the PS2 North American and European launches. Hopefully the rubberband AI and frame-rate problems will be history when *Trickstyle* hits the PlayStation 2.

Japan Now!

Tekken Tag Tournament (PlayStation 2)

Since the announcement of a *Tekken* brawler for PlayStation 2, Namco has begun to release more shots of it in action. You can clearly see the PS2's massive graphical leap over the PS but one question remains. Will it simply be a really pretty looking conversion of arcade TTT or the next great thing? Import gamers will get a chance to judge for themselves when the game hits Japan on the PlayStation 2's March 4th launch day.

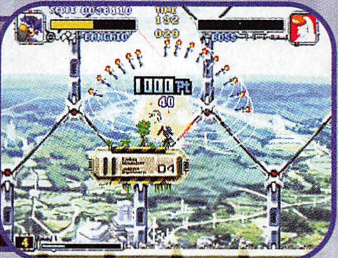




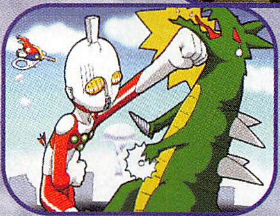


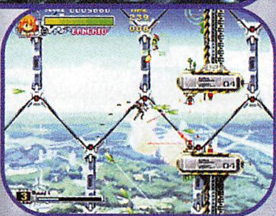
Bangaio (Dreamcast)

For all you hardcore gamers out there who tracked down one of the 10,000 copies of Treasure's latest side-scrolling N64 Shooter *Bakuretsu Muteki Bangaio* (and have yet to hawk said game on e-Bay!), get ready to witness the second coming. Sporting increased graphical prowess, better sound and more of the same great action that led to ECM's insomnia, DC *Bangaio* rocks. So, Treasure, when can I expect to get my DC version of the ultra-cool PS brawler *Rakugaki Showtime*?









Berserk (Dreamcast)

Wielding a sword dubbed the "Dragon Killer" that stands almost as tall as he does, *Berserk*'s hero Gattsu is one mean hombre. If you've were fortunate to have seen the import anime, you know what to expect: Start with *Ninja Scroll* and then get bigger and bloodier. Almost all the GameFan staffers are waiting with bated breath to see if the Dreamcast conversion does the title justice, or falls prey to the much reviled "*Macross* Conversion Syndrome" (read: potential drink coaster). Definitely not for the easily disturbed or wee Furys out there, expect a full review of the import version of *Berserk* in the next issue.





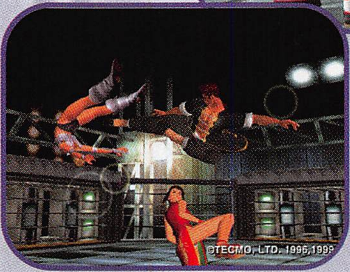



Dead Or Alive 2 *(Dreamcast)*



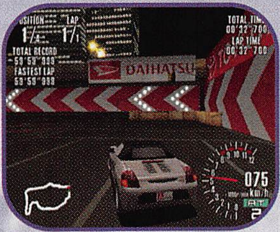
The good news is that Tecmo's *Dead or Alive 2* has just been released in Japanese arcades, meaning that a US release is that much closer. With a Tag Battle Mode included via time release, this definitely isn't your run of the mill sequel. The great news is that a Dreamcast conversion of this incredible game is well underway and you can expect to get your sticky hands on an import version around the month of March.






Sega GT *(Dreamcast)*

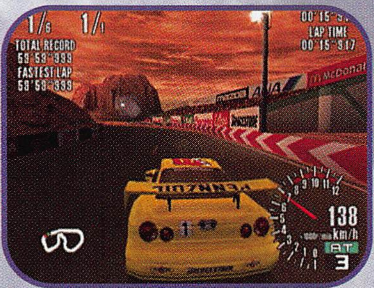


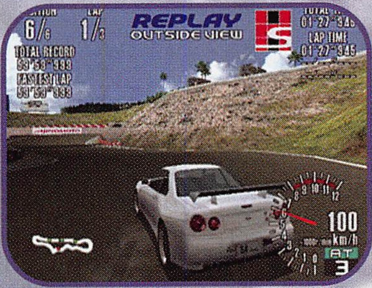


For all you Sega fans who cried foul when Sony was crowned 'King of Racers' with *Gran Turismo* and have begged lo these many months for a conversion of *Super GT*...Sega feels your pain. *Sega GT Homologation Special* has secretly been in development for some time now, and is planned for a "Pre-PS2" ship date of February 24 in Japan. Featuring over 100 cars by actual racing teams (such as the Castrol Supra and the Cusco Impreza) you'll be able to test your driving stamina in multiple modes of play.








Super GT fans, start your salivary glands!!!

PLAYSTATION 2 DEVELOPERS LISTING: Sony has released a tentative listing of all titles in development for the PlayStation 2 and some highly notable titles are in the works. Here is a quick run-down of the most anticipated games:

Capcom	Oni Musha
	Street Fighter EX 3
Enix	Star Ocean 3
From Software, Inc.	Armored Core 2
Hudson Soft Co, Ltd.	Bloody Roar 3
	Bomberman 2001
Idea Factory Co, Ltd.	Sky Surfer
Koei Co, Ltd.	Kessen
NAMCO Limited	Tekken Tag Tournament
	New Ridge Racer
	500 GP
Sony	Gran Turismo 2000
	Tenchu 2
Square Co Ltd.	The Bouncer
Tecmo Ltd.	Ninja Gaiden
Titus	Robocop

Imports

Reviews



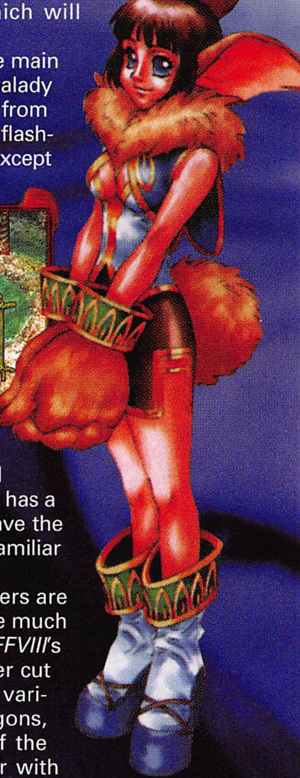


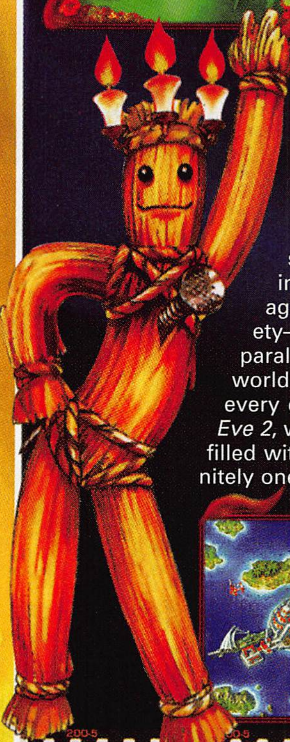
What has to be the most anticipated Square game in Japan this year has finally come out... and it is good. *Chrono Cross*, the sequel to the cult-classic *Chrono Trigger* (the great SNES RPG which had the misfortune of debuting when RPGs were **not** popular), is at last in our hands... not just a demo, but the whole thing, and what follows is the mouth-watering *GameFan* review...

So where should I start? With the ever-clichéd graphics? Nah, let's do music. *Chrono Trigger* had one of the best game soundtracks ever. Yet, the more I hear of *Chrono Cross'* score (also done by Yasunori Mitsuda), the more I like it better than *Chrono Trigger* (a bold statement, I know). The Overworld theme is just awesome, and after that horrendous *FFVIII* Overworld music, Mitsuda has renewed my faith in Square's composition abilities once again. If you're a hard-core gamer holding out to play the American version of this game, you should still buy the soundtrack, because it's an instant-classic which will surely grow roots in your CD player.

Story is key in RPGs, and *Chrono Cross* is no slouch. The main character, Serge, suffers from acute Square disorder, a malady which causes main characters in Square RPGs to suffer from conditions like schizophrenia, hallucinations, amnesia, flashbacks, and questions of identity. Serge is no different, except







his flashbacks are of the time-travelling variety. Not only questions of "Who am I?" but "Who am I and what time is it?" <shiver>. Simply put, the game has a great story (Serge's quest for his identity), but I'll leave the surprises to you... let's just say you'll encounter a familiar face or two along the way.

Chrono Cross is a graphical tour de force. Characters are polygonal like *Final Fantasy VIII*, but their features are much smoother and cleaner than the sharp 'jaggies' of *FFVIII*'s inhabitants (Oww! Squall's hair gave me a nasty paper cut again...). Backgrounds are of the standard pre-rendered variety—eye candy exemplified—with a smattering of polygons, parallax, and transparencies to break up the 'flatness' of the world. These 2D backgrounds only continue to get better with every outing, and I'm expecting a similar leap in quality from *Parasite Eve 2*, which is due sometime next month. *CC*'s landscapes are lush and filled with minute detail, reminiscent of *Jade Cocoon* to a degree. This is definitely one of the prettiest games the PlayStation will ever see.









Visually, the battles are a mix between *FFVIII* and *Legend of Legaia*. There are two camera options to choose between. "Normal" is the classic *FFVIII*-style camera which follows the action from a distance, like a full-court cam in sports. "Dramatic" cam is like *Legaia*, zooming in on characters and enemies, circling them from all sides, and offering the occasional facial close-up. The choice in camera styles offers something for everyone, whether you like your RPGs cut and dried or full of glitz and glam, MTV-style.

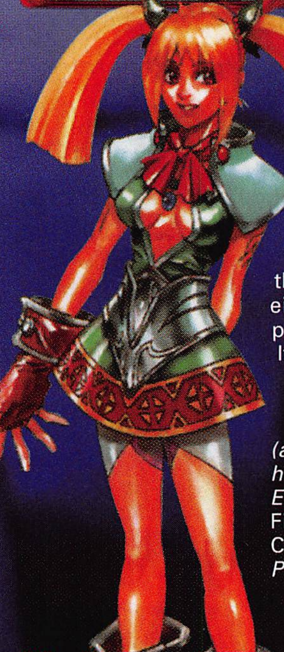
Gameplay-wise, the fighting is similar to *Xenogears*. You're given a certain amount of stamina points to spend every turn, with the weaker attacks having a higher hit percentage and requiring less energy to execute. Magic spells can also be cast at any time during the turn. So it's possible to hit an enemy with four normal attacks, then cast an offensive magic spell, all in one turn. Of course, such a draining round of combat will most likely require you to "defend" next turn to regain stamina. After many, many years in the RPG business, Square's found that fine balance between exploration, battles, and story-telling, and *Chrono Cross* exemplifies this.

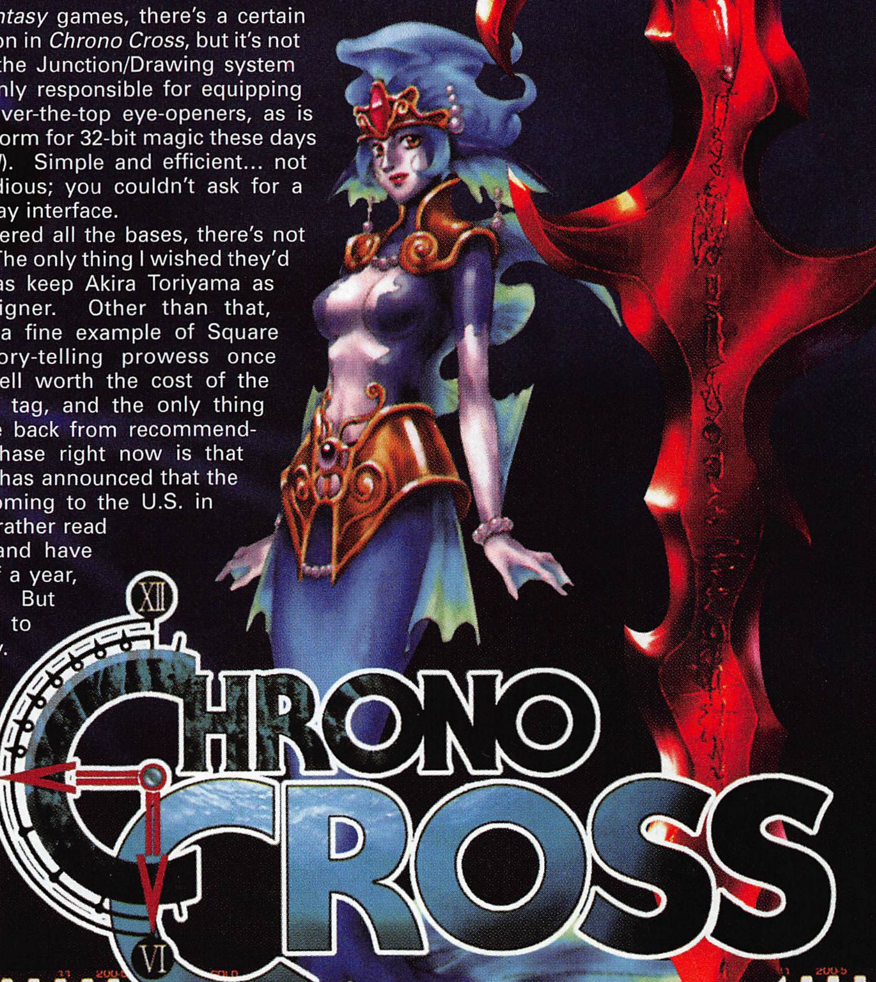
If replay value is ever in question, you'll discover new things with every play. Just a few hours in, Waka and I both had different party members and quests at the same point in the game. And to squelch any rumors, the dialogue/script actually changes depending on who's in the party. The characters aren't exactly interchangeable parts.

Like the *Final Fantasy* games, there's a certain level of customization in *Chrono Cross*, but it's not as complicated as the Junction/Drawing system of *FFVIII*. You're only responsible for equipping spells, which are over-the-top eye-openers, as is fast becoming the norm for 32-bit magic these days (see *Arc the Lad III*). Simple and efficient... not convoluted and tedious; you couldn't ask for a more convenient play interface.

Now that I've covered all the bases, there's not much left to say... The only thing I wished they'd done differently was keep Akira Toriyama as the character designer. Other than that, *Chrono Cross* is a fine example of Square proving its story-telling prowess once again. It's well worth the cost of the import price tag, and the only thing holding me back from recommending a purchase right now is that Square EA has announced that the game is coming to the U.S. in 2000. If you'd rather read the story in English and have the patience to wait half a year, then hold off on it now. But either way, you'll have to play this game eventually. It's that good.

Eggo is still crossing his fingers (and toes...) in hopes of Square EA re-releasing Final Fantasy IV *and* Chrono Trigger *on PlayStation.*







VIEWPOINT SCORE: 95	DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT	1 PLAYER	EGGO: TOO MUCH REPLAY
	PUBLISHER - SQUARESOFT	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VALUE—NOT ENOUGH TIME.

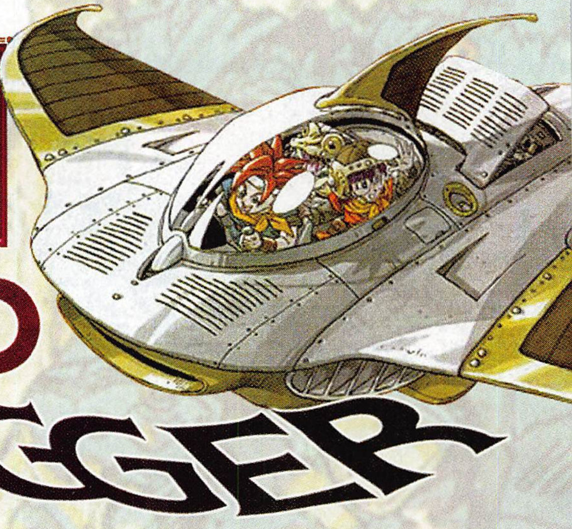
REVIEW

PlayStation









Chrono Trigger

Our *Final Fantasy VIII* viewpoints (scores of 68, 78, and 85 from ECM, Dangohead, and Cerberus) drew a lot of heat from outraged people who considered us crazy for blaspheming Square's latest 'masterpiece.' That didn't phase us, because we never lost sight of what a true Square 'masterpiece' was—a role-playing game that's perfect in every way: graphics, gameplay, music... But in case it's been a while since you've played an RPG of this caliber, or if *Final Fantasy VII* was your first (nothing wrong with that, as long as you're willing to try something new... err, old), then join me as we relive one of Square's finer hours.

Chrono Trigger was the last great Square RPG released on the SNES back in 1995. At the time, the graphics were unrivaled; and the game is still remarkable for a 5-year-old, 16-bit title. Character designs are done by Akira Toriyama, famous for the *Dragon Ball*, *Dragon Quest* (known as *Dragon Warrior* in the U.S.), and *Tobal* games. The joyous music was composed by Yasunori Mitsuda, who also worked on *Xenogears* and *Chrono Cross* (the sequel to this game, also reviewed this issue). Simply put, *Chrono Trigger* has one of the best game soundtracks ever. Lastly, the gameplay is perfect. It's a modified version of the classic *Final Fantasy* battle system with a great story to boot. I say modified because *CT* is one of the first RPGs to feature team attacks, where two or more characters work together for a turbo-powered combination assault with eye-popping and enemy splitting results.

There's only one flaw with the PlayStation version of *Chrono Trigger*, and that's loading. Every time you access a menu or enter a battle, you'll lose a few seconds from your life. If you're a PlayStation gamer who wasn't born and bred on cartridges, then this isn't even an issue, since modern day RPGs like *Parasite Eve*, *Final Fantasy VIII*, and *FF Anthology* all loaded as well. But if you're like me, then this is an annoyance which brings down the game, but not to the level of not warranting a purchase.

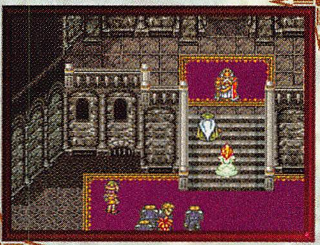
Fortunately, *CT* on PS isn't a sub-par port of the SNES version. Square's added a bunch of extras to the PS game. FMV sequences (featuring traditional, Toriyama-style animation) are the headliner, breathing new life into Akira Toriyama's legendary characters. The intro has been completely revamped with an FMV makeover and arranged music; it even looks and sounds phenomenal, upholding this game's already high standards. The ending and major events in the game are also retold with gorgeous FMV of the finest quality. After beating the game, an Omake mode unlocks, which lets you replay all the music and FMV that you've already seen. Plus, there's an added scene at the end of the game tying it into *Chrono Cross*.

In an alternate universe, Eggo is playing his copy of Square's Classics Collection, a PS game comprised of Final Fantasy IV, Final Fantasy VI, *and* Chrono Trigger *(hint hint, Square EA).*







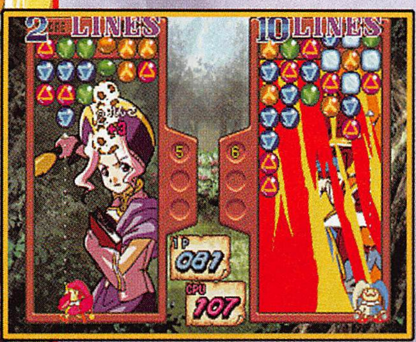




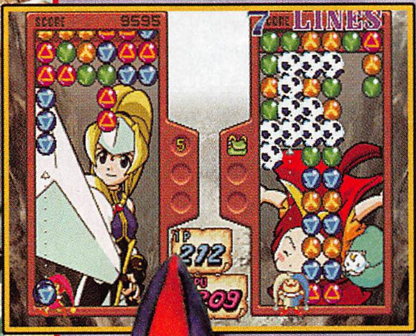


R REVIEW	Eggo: Reminisce with me... on a better *time* in games.	Developer - Squaresoft Publisher - Squaresoft	1 Player Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 94









If there's one genre which is shockingly not well represented on console, it's puzzle games. How many real puzzle games are released domestically? You can probably count them on one hand... *Bust a Move '99, Tetris Plus, Devil Dice, Roll Away...* umm, see what I mean? Point being, puzzle games are harder to come by than female sausages, and good puzzle games are even more rare. *Magical Drop F* is just that.

Here's a series which has been around for some time, but you wouldn't know it if you weren't into Neo Geo or importing. At first glance, it looks like a *Puyo Puyo* or *Columns*, but *Magical Drop F* places a much stronger emphasis on speed; it's up there with the frenetic, 'one mistake will be your last' *Bust-A-Move* in terms of edge-of-your-seat gameplay.

The object of this game is to line up three or more blocks of the same color vertically. When you do, any adjacent blocks of the same color disappear, and while that's happening, you're supposed to set up the next group (of a different color) to make it a chain combo. Because you're constantly running around setting up chains (time being of the utmost importance), there's never a dull moment, and you can't glance away from the action at all. Sure the concept seems simple, but the execution requires quick, on-your-feet thinking and even faster reflexes.

After more than three games on console, this series' gameplay is rock solid and fine-tuned like a well-oiled machine. The characters have loads of personality, being based off of Tarot cards. You'll encounter mythical incarnations of Justice, The Devil, The Fool, The Moon, and Death. Of course, they all look like cutesy anime chicks, but at least Shidoshi will like it.

For people who require 50 play modes in their games like Cerberus (poor guy grew up on a steady diet of well-endowed NAMCO titles, and now he is lost to the rest of us...), *MDF* has a Story Mode, Vs., Survival, and Midget Tossing Mode. The Story Mode is actually important because playing through it earns power-ups which can be loaded and customized to your taste in Vs. mode. These power-ups act as special moves and add more personality to the characters, granting you abilities such as clearing your screen of balls, changing the color of the balls your opponent throws out, putting him/her to sleep, etc.

This is one of the best puzzle games out there, but unfortunately, the only *Magical Drop* games that have come Stateside have been for the Neo Geo console. Chances are *MDF* will suffer the fate of being stranded overseas. So if you're craving a good puzzle game, look no further. Just Drop by the local import store, and tell 'em Eggo sent ya.

Eggo is looking forward to playing Magical Drop Hyper X Omega Complete *someday.*







Viewpoint Score :88	Developer - Data East	1-2 Players	EGGO: Must...	R Review
	Publisher - Data East	Available Now Japan	not... blink... AGH!	

If you haven't heard of the *Arc the Lad* series yet, you should. It, like *Tobal 2*, was one of the few treasures that didn't make it to the boat carrying Japanese PlayStation titles to America (we can only assume it was neglected because it was... <gasp> an RPG, and a short one at that).

So in case you missed the boat as well, here's a little background on *Arc the Lad*. Perhaps the closest comparison is *Suikoden*. The first *AtL* came out in Japan early in the PlayStation's career, when RPGs were scarce and demand was high. It had that same visual presentation (sprite characters and 2D backgrounds), and great music. Yet it also shared *Suikoden's* tragic flaw—length... or lack thereof. The first *AtL* could be finished in less than 10 hours—a shockingly short time-span for a strategy RPG. *Arc the Lad II* (like *Suikoden 2*) increased the play time to a hefty 30+ hours, and it let you use crossover data from the original game at the beginning of the new one.

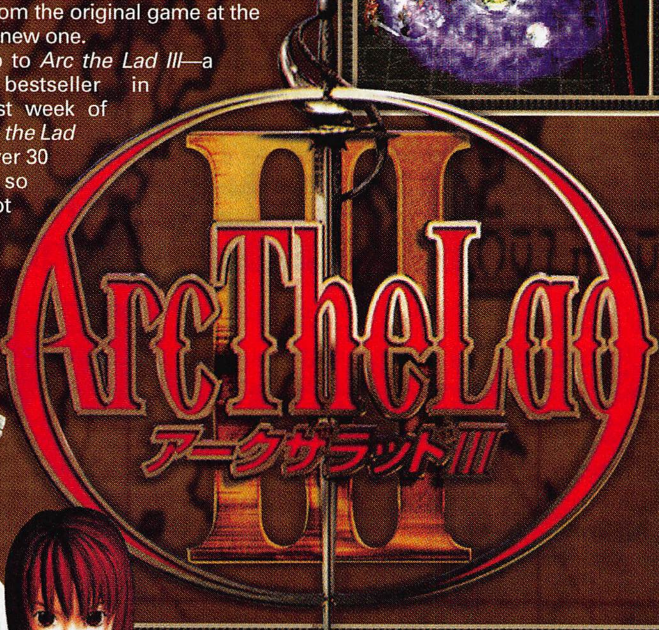
Now, we're up to *Arc the Lad III*—a chart-topping bestseller in Japan in its first week of release. Like *Arc the Lad II*, the game is over 30 hours long, so length should not be a problem. The graphics are still basic for an RPG and unfortunately look a bit dated for fourth generation PS software. It's not that I don't like sprites and pre-rendered backgrounds, but other 2D RPGs, such as *Saga Frontier 2* or *Seiken Densetsu: Legend of Mana*, do the same with better results. *Arc 3*'s caller spells have gone the route of other RPG summons—over-the-top, eye-candy-coated wonders of the world. Is it common practice now for RPG spells to be so overly dramatic? Music, which has always been a strong point of the series, continues to impress in its third outing; this is no *Chrono Cross* or *Final Fantasy Tactics*-caliber soundtrack, but this game's music is better than most.

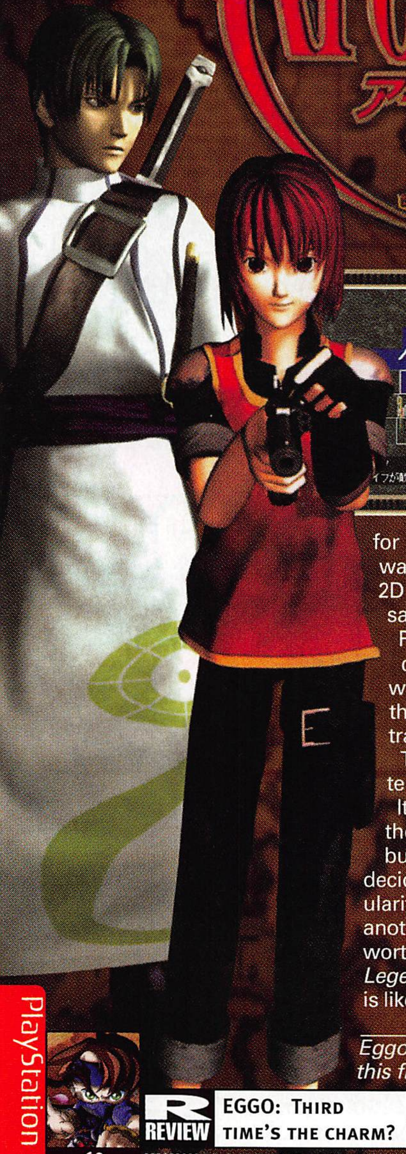
The battles, like the other *Arc* games, are still turn-based, strategy encounters along the lines of *FF Tactics*.

It's unfortunate that none of the *Arc the Lad* games have seen light of day in the States yet. It's far too late for us to the get either of the first two games, but the third is definitely worthy of release. It's only a matter of a publisher deciding to take the risk. For what it's worth, RPGs are at the height of their popularity, so now is as good a time as any for a publisher (hello, Sony?) to bring another RPG to the lucrative American market. If you're wondering whether it's worth the hefty import price tag, keep in mind that high-profile RPGs like *Legend of Dragoon*, *Valkyrie Profile*, and *Parasite Eve 2* are coming soon. This is like an appetizer before the main course, but if your appetite's large enough...



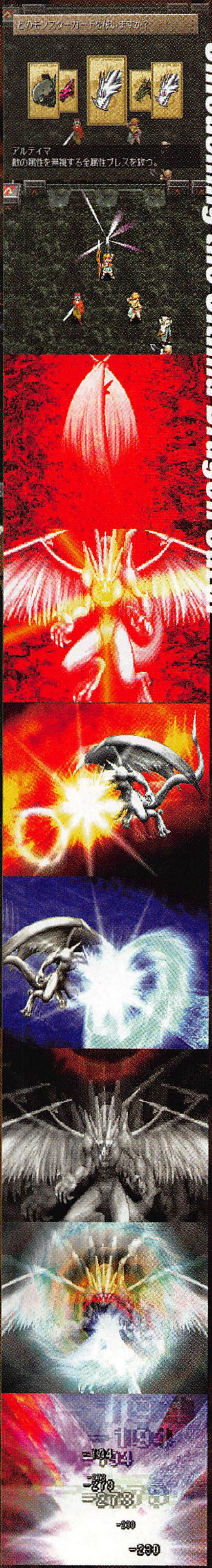








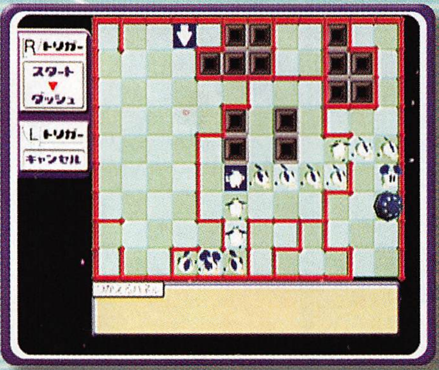
Unleashing the Ultima Dragon Card!

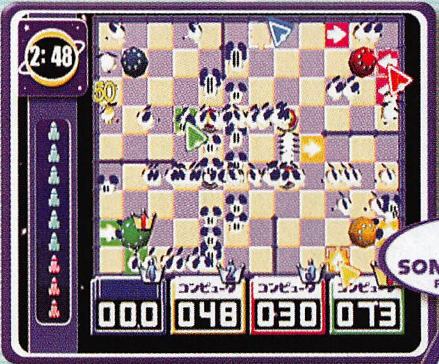


Eggo would like to start a company which rescues quality import titles such as this from being stranded forever in Japan.

R REVIEW			
EGGO: THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM?	DEVELOPER - ARC ENT.	1 PLAYER	VIEWPOINT SCORE :82
	PUBLISHER - SCEI	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	









We laughed, we chortled, we scoffed, we derided and we snickered. After all, this was to be one of Sonic Team's big four titles? A game about chasing mice around a bland, drab checkerboard, loading them into rockets and shooting them into space?! This had to be a joke, a test of some sort… perhaps it was to be a trial to see if we were worthy of *NiGHTS 2*… it all had to be a lark of some sort, right? Well kiddies, it isn't…

However, let it not be said that we don't admit our mistakes (I'm still reeling over the fact that I really love DC *Soul Calibur*). As it turns out, *Chu Chu Rocket* is one of the best games released this year. In fact, it's among the great multi-player games of all time, sharing shelf space with the likes of *Super Bomberman 2* and *Worms Armageddon* as the most brilliant of party games ever conceived. I'd go as far as to say it's even among the DC's killer apps—titles like *Sonic Adventure, Power Stone, Soul Calibur, Maken X*, and other AAA fare that's **only** available on DC; softs that make the casual gamer go out and buy Dreamcasts by the truckload.

"So what's the big deal?!" you cry? Well it's a little something like *Hungry Hungry Hippos* on acid. Ya know, the old board game with the marbles and the multi-colored plastic hippos all vying to consume the most 'food'? If you don't, well, go slap your parents around a bit and then come right back (you've been neglected). Done? OK, let's get to it.

The goal in *CCR* is to steer a bunch of mindless mice into a series of rockets while competing against up to three other like-minded ranchers. Once time runs out, the person with the most mice in his capsule launches into space (presumably to the moon with its large supply of green cheese) and wins the round. Steering the mice into rockets is accomplished by placing arrows on each of the squares that lead from the mouse holes to your rocket. For example, pushing y will place an 'up' arrow on the ground, x a 'left' arrow and so on. Doesn't sound fun? Well, keep in mind that these mice have ADD; they're F-A-S-T. Couple this to the fact that certain mice, once they come in contact with a ship, will generate random effects such as speed-up, slow down, or the insidious rocket-swap (where all four rockets are rotated around the board). You can steer the mice towards your rocket; away from a foe's rocket; or play spoiler and steer the evil cats into your former friends' capsule. The cats will remove a set number of mice from your total, thereby stealing defeat from the jaws of victory…and believe me, this is **far** more frustrating than being pinned in by a bomb in *Bomberman* on the first toss of the game. It may not sound like much, but believe me, the office was in a frenzy for many days after the Rocket's arrival…until of course Mr. Deadline came a' knockin'.

So who's laughing now? Apparently Sonic Team is. The game was number one on the Japanese chart the week of its release, and while it soon slipped to 18th that doesn't ignore the fact that this game is incredible fun and on the fast-track as a localized U.S. title (just in time for the launch of the U.S. gaming network—did I mention it's a network title?). Suffice it to say, we're eating our crow (or is it cheese?)… and loving **every** minute of it.

ECM sometimes wishes he'd be herded into a rocket and blasted to the moon to get away from Reubus's two cats.









Viewpoint Score: 95	Developer - Sonic Team	1-4 Players	ECM: Where's John Fogerty?
	Publisher - Sega	Available Now Japan	

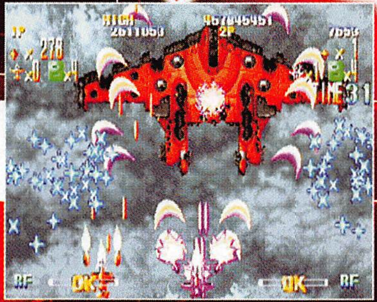
REVIEW

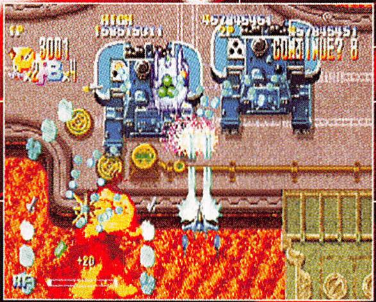


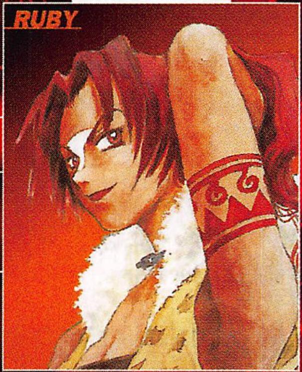


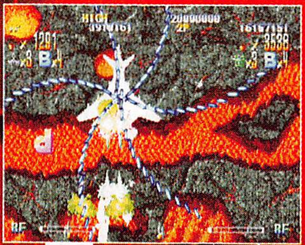


















If you made a trip to GFHQ, you'd probably notice several things that you wouldn't expect: the startling fact that I'm actually taller than Eggo, Waka, and Fury; Dango's head really **is** that big; and yes, we really don't like *FFVIII*... at all (Eggo excepted, of course). But one thing that probably wouldn't shock you is the legion of portable and 16-bit systems piled high on my desk, in pseudo-homage to an age gone by (Kid Fan calls it clutter... I call it history). If you were then inclined to look a bit more closely, you'd also notice the array of titles housed in each of those systems: a *M.U.S.H.A.* cart in the Genesis 3; a *Soldier Blade* chip in the Turbo Express; *Axelay* in the SNES; *Spriggan* (or alternatively, *Gates of Thunder*) in a shiny new Duo R; *Lightening Force* in a Nomad... even an under-played copy of *R-Type* in a GameBoy Color (still don't like that game, btw). Furthermore, if you were to slip on the set of MD (mini-disc **not** Mega Drive) headphones strategically located amidst the <ahem> clutter, you might recognize audio track 19 from *Thunder Force V* playing in all its Mega Bass glory. The net result of this sudden wave of sepia-toned nostalgia might lead to a very sad revelation (one I seemingly relive on a monthly basis by way of my handy soap box): the genre many of us revered above all others is dead and gone. Certainly there's still the occasional arcade shooter produced by the likes of Psikyo and Raizing in Japan, but looking towards the home platforms, it's a sorry wasteland of over-hyped RPGs, lackluster 3D platformers, and endless waves of tired racing games (not to mention boatloads of sports games, <sigh>). Here or abroad, the shooter is deader than a Usenet poster's life on Friday night.

Now this could very quickly degenerate into a melodramatic rant about shooters and 2D games, but I'll spare you... this month. For now, I have one of the last gasps of the genre staring up at me, and on Dreamcast, no less. If you haven't figured it out yet, I love shooters. If I could only play one type of game from now till the end of time, it would be shmups (shoot-'em-ups for the uninitiated). Games like *Spriggan*, *M.U.S.H.A.*, *Thunder Force 3-5*, *Gradius Gaiden*, *Darius Gaiden*, *Radiant Silvergun*, *Bangaio*, *Tatsujin*, *Eliminate Down*, *Axelay*, *R-Type Leo* (and only *R-Type Leo*), *Blazing Star*, *Raiden Fighters Jet*, and on and on and on... Sadly, however, *Giga Wing* would not be one of them.

Where do the problems begin? Well, graphics are as good a place as any. *Giga Wing* ran on CPS-2 hardware in arcades, so it's not like I was expecting much... Since this ancient hardware continues to pump out games like *Street Fighter Alpha 3* and *Marvel vs. Capcom*, I certainly had higher hopes. In fact, *19XX*, a shooter from five years ago (running on the same spec) destroys this game graphically. Maybe the fact that Capcom seemed to be going for something akin to Cave/Atlus' stunning *Do Don Pachi* was what set them down the wrong path. Whatever the case, the game isn't much of a sight, regardless of the hardware it started on.

As for gameplay, Capcom wisely decided to throw a twist into the *DDP*-inspired graphics and heavy-duty, token-collecting 'play. Instead of simply plowing through wave after wave of enemy craft and hard-core bosses, they threw a twist in the form of the reflection ray into the mix. This allows you to throw enemies' bullets back in their face. While it's certainly a nice gimmick, it ultimately makes a painfully easy experience that much simpler. How much of a threat could the encroaching enemy armada pose, when you can toss everything and the kitchen sink back at them? Not much, I'm afraid. Heck, even on eight stars the game fails to become even remotely challenging. And for adrenaline junkies like you and I, that's a **big** no-no.

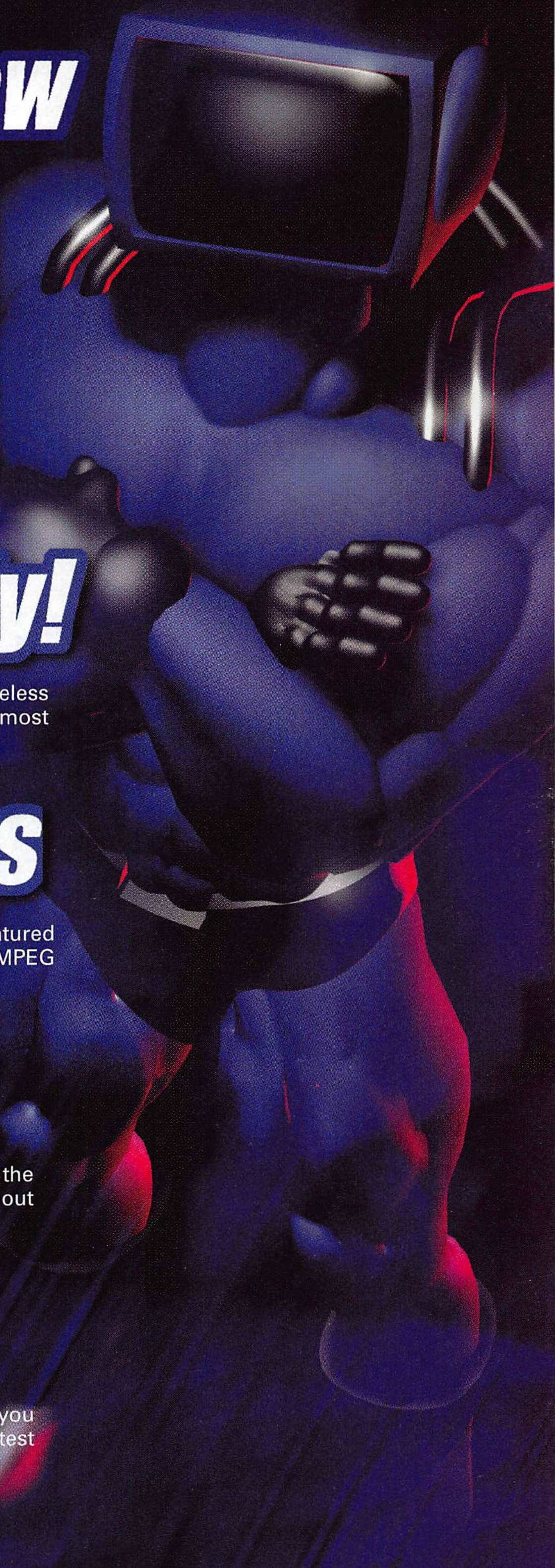
It's sad, really. While a legion of blazing blasters never made it over to Saturn and now sit in piles on developers' shelves begging for a port over to DC, we get *GW* instead. Who among you wouldn't like to see *Raiden Fighters Jet*, *Blazing Star* or *ESPrade* at home? I know I would; and I gather I'm not alone on this (almost, but not quite). Now I only have the 'where did it go?' *Shienryu 2* to look forward to... and the prayer that Raizing sees fit to bring *Battle Bakraid* over this lifetime.

ECM regularly runs throughout the office, his arms extended, screaming "Pcheeow!! Pcheeow! Pche-pcheeow!!"



R REVIEW	ECM: Thanks, but no thanks...	Developer - Capcom	1-2 Players	Viewpoint Score :65
		Publisher - Capcom	Available Now Japan	

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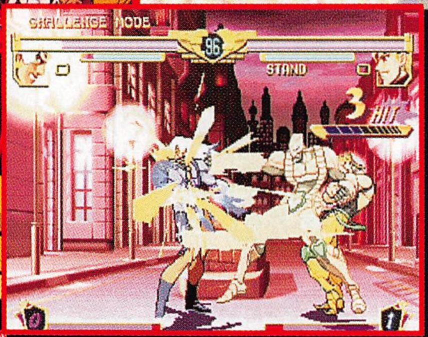
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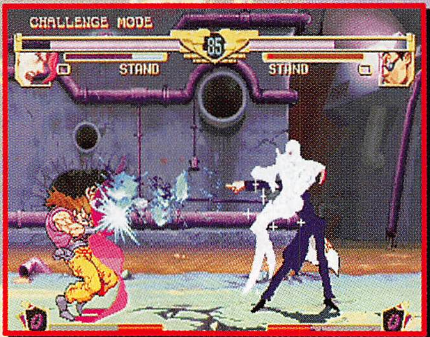
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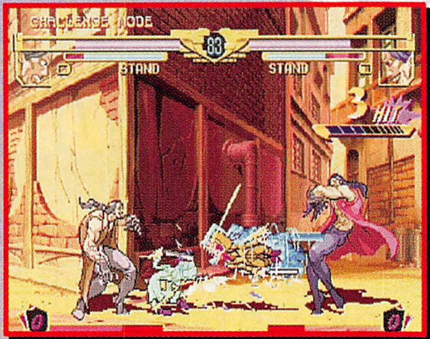
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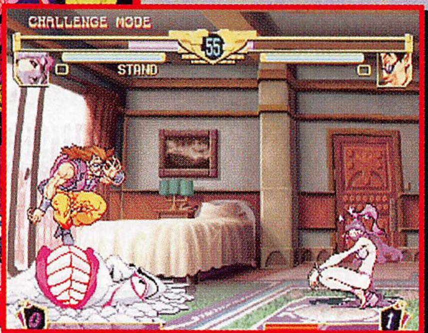
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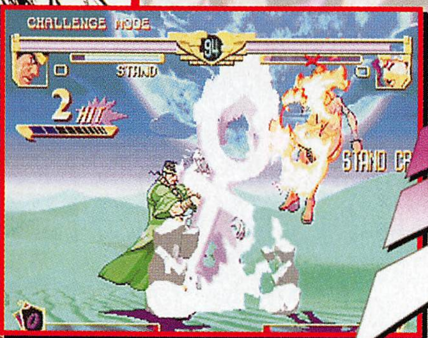












If you read my review of *Jo Jo's* last issue, you know that the PlayStation wasn't able to completely re-create the arcade game's scaling or frame count. Instead, what the PlayStation version did was integrate enough mini-games to keep me interested for days. No hard-core gamer would consider *Jo Jo's* a serious fighting game, but the mini-games were reason enough to give it a whirl. Kooky, diverse, unique... call them what you will, Fury and I couldn't stop playing them.

The Dreamcast game contains both *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure* and its sequel (which the PlayStation game was based on). But before you run out the door to buy the DC *Jo Jo's*, I must warn you of something. Sure, the animation, scaling, and special effects that were missing in the PS version are back, but the best part of the stew is gone. Yep, most of the mini-games I loved so much have gone AWOL; Capcom must've wanted to go for a straight fighter. Yet this leaves me with little or no interest in the DC version. Sure, there's clean, arcade-quality animation and spiffy scaling, but where's my poker game?

Story and Challenge mode get pretty monotonous when there's no fluff in between. Sadly, *Jo Jo's* fighting system isn't very complex. Once you've mastered a character's thug-tactics patterns, you'll breeze right on through. That's not what I want, and I doubt you do either. As a two player affair, *Jo Jo's* falls somewhere between mediocre and 'hella cheap.' The one thing I have to hand to *Jo Jo's* is that it's perfect for the DC pad. But there's problems when the best compliment I can give a game is how it puts the D-pad to good use.

Don't get me wrong, I don't hate *Jo Jo's* on the DC. It's not bad at all, but the cool gimmickry found in the PlayStation version isn't here. Plus there's *SFA3, Power Stone, MvC,* and even *SFIII: W Impact* headed our way. Do you have enough extra cash to warrant buying this? I doubt it. You've got two choices here: buy *Jo Jo's* on the PlayStation for its Story mode and mini-games, or buy the DC version of *Jo Jo's* because it's two-games-in-one and has all the eye-candy from the arcade piece—choose one, but choose wisely...

Cerberus ain't too pleased with the lack of mini-games in the Dreamcast version of Jo Jo's.



R REVIEW	CERBERUS: Hey, whaddaya know, Naomi is Latin for CPSIII	Developer - Capcom Publisher - Capcom	1-2 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score :85



"Deus Ex Machina"

God in the Machine

Stop me if you've Heard this One Before

It's 3 AM and I can barely put the controller down to pen this review so it can make it 11th-hour-style into the mag before the issue closes: Viewpoints not finished; Ed Zone laying idle, mid-thought; Reubus fuming behind me with a big stick threatening to do very bad things with it if I don't finish things up real fast, so bear with me if you have to deal with something akin to a really rough review put together with enough bubble gum and tape to mend—'ow!' "OK Reubus, I'm writing... <grumble>."



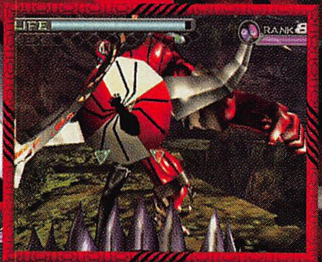




Made In America

If there's one genre in which American developers have **all** others beat, it's the "One man against the world, corridor shooting shotgun-fest" as one eager developer terms it. The rest of us know it as the First Person Shooter or FPS. Whether it's PC (*Quake*, *Unreal*, *Half-Life*, etc. ad nauseam) or console (*Turok*, *Powerslave SS*) American developers are where it's at in this genre. Sure, the Europeans have *GoldenEye* to their credit (and what a credit it is!), but all the Land of the Rising Sun gets is 'games' like *Kileak*, *Deadalus*, *Crime Crackers*, and *Space Griffon* (anybody else retching and reaching for the Pepto?). Yep, if you a) live in Japan and b) don't have a PC or buy American imports you're probably willing to accept the aforementioned bargain-bin fodder—after all, a starving gamer will play just about anything (bear witness to the stomach-churning success of various wrestling games). However, does this mean that they're as incapable as American developers are at delivering a truly brilliant 3D platformer or stunning fighting game? In a word: "NO."

For starters, I'm one of the few gamers out there that think the single-player experiences in games like *GoldenEye*, *Turok 2*, and *Powerslave SS* completely crushed the one-player outings of their PC brethren (yes, I liked them better than the much over-blown *Half-Life*, so back off)—thus little annoyances such as lack of a mouse and keyboard are a little more easily swept under a handy, extra-thick, shag rug. I was a platforming madman in *Powerslave* and with the introduction of '*Turok* control' to the console gaming world, nobody could really complain too much about the lack of such conveniences anymore, right? So when word came down that *Maken X* wasn't exactly shaping up to be much more than the DC's *Kileak* or *Deadalus*, I was more than a little disheartened (reaching for the Pepto again, <bleargh>). I figured it was back to the über-framey halls of *Turok 2* or a much-worn copy of *Powerslave*. As it stands, though, the final rev of *Maken X* is an absolutely mind-bending experience (in more ways than one)! So hold onto your sentient implements of destruction, people, the hyperbole begins... now.



Quake Meets *MegaTen*

Don't have a clue as to what *MegaTen* is, do you? Well, allow me to give you an all-too-quick description (those of you that know can skip ahead a bit...and give yourselves a gold star): *MegaTen* is short for *Megami Tensei*, an extremely popular series of games in Japan (one chapter of which even made it to our shores in the form of Atlus' 'love it or hate it' *Persona*). In the Land of the Rising Sun it has a tremendous following, and one of the reasons is the distinct art style handled by Kazuma Kaneko (also responsible for Atlus' Japanese mascot, Jack Frost). His off-the-wall depiction of demons and blazing character design make the intense graphic style and incredible character design in *Maken X* possible. Those shots you see with the swastika-faced villains are his handiwork (apparently, though, they're there more for shock value than anything else).





All the artwork has a decidedly futuristic-retro look. For instance, the giant robot sentries in the Whitehouse basement look like something out of '50s sci-fi. Art direction isn't the only thing *Maken X* shares with *MegaTen*: the designer of the game is also the creator of the *MT* games—Cozu Okada. This practically ensures that the game story will be completely off the wall... and it is.

Tell Us a Story, Uncle ECM

The story in *Maken X* is, well, weird—there's no other way to put it. Essentially, Maken X is the sentient weapon that your (various) characters wield. It was crafted by God and sent down to save the world from impending doom. The wielder of the weapon is Kei Sagami, a 16-year-old girl that witnesses the kidnapping of her father, deep within the lab that is studying Maken X. Apparently these heavies have something to do with the end of all things, as she swiftly employs Deus Ex Machina (God in the machine, for you Latin-illiterate out there) a.k.a. Maken X in the form of a sword (shape of a blade... ack, feeble *Super Friends* reference... move along...). And thus she embarks, ostensibly to save her father, but with the much wider reaching goal of saving mankind.





The Man with 8 Brains?!

Other than the fact that *MX* is riddled with hand-to-hand combat as opposed to projectile-based battling (as in 99% of FPS'), the key to gameplay is your ability to "brain-jack" certain enemies. Since you essentially play the role of the sentient weapon, you can take control of various and sundry enemies along the way, each more powerful than the last. This is achieved by defeating certain enemies (bosses, for example) or simply finding others that allow you to 'possess' them. This is what makes *MX* so amazingly hot. Instead of being the jacked-up marine or escaped prisoner, you can take the role of a small army of characters each with their own stats (speed, strength, jumping, etc.) and individual weapon of choice.

Give me Gameplay, or Give me Death! –OR- It's a Poor Craftsman that Blames His Tools

While nigh-every game in the genre features foes launching projectiles at one another from across vast, galaxy-devouring distances (any other *Tribes* players out there?), *MX* is just a little bit different. This time out, all combat is handled hand-to-hand, mano-a-mano, me against you... err, sorry, it's late.

The key to combat is the handy lock-on reticule which first appeared in *Zelda:OOT* and is now getting 'baby sealed' to death by every developer in the book—nothing like a really great idea being beat to death. By 'locking on' to an enemy, you can rotate around a foe, delivering swift, Errol Flynn-like blows. Depending on the speed and damage rating of your character, you can land critical attacks that will take off up to 50% more damage than a regular strike.

The action gets pretty fierce when you're trying to juggle three or four onscreen opponents, deftly tapping the lock button to get a different foe in your sites, but after about 20 minutes it becomes second nature. Factor in the ability to leap over the heads of unsuspecting, locked-on foes and you'll be dealing death in short order—keep the shovel handy.

Variety Is the Spice of Life...Sometimes

In fact, the only real negative with the combat system is that it's a bit limited. While different combinations with the analog stick in conjunction with ye ol' attack button allow for different types of strikes, and pulling down on the stick blocks attacks, it's all rather limited. While it's amazing fun to strike and block an opponent's blows, it would have been nice if they'd implemented some sort of combo system to help jack the game up. In fact, if they could develop the hand-to-hand aspect a bit more, it could be a game unto itself... featuring net play (hmmm, note to self...).

The one other (admittedly minor) gameplay issue is the control scheme. See, instead of adopting tried-and-true *Turok*-style 'play (the four action buttons walk, while the analog stick 'looks'), you're forced to cope with the analog stick for movement and the buttons for attacks. After playing massive, unhealthy doses of *Turok* and *GoldenEye*, it's a bit jarring to return to the days of 'lookless' gameplay. The net result is that it feels more like you're driving a car than controlling a human (or superhuman) being. However, once you come to grips with the control (looking up and down isn't integral to gameplay: good or bad, you decide) you'll soon forget all about it... just don't forget the clutch.



It's Unreal... Sort Of

While *Maken X* isn't the most visually spectacular game available on DC, it's certainly something to take note of nonetheless. In addition to the absolutely stunning character designs (mentioned a ways back in this rambling diatribe I call a review), the engine is nothing to laugh at. The environments are seamless, and everything 'feels' solid. Frame-rate generally sticks to the established DC speed limit of 60 fps, though it does dip (sometimes very roughly) when too many enemies decide to get in on the action. While it's far from the best on Dreamcast, it's also far from the worst.





Coming to America!

Perhaps the best part of *Maken X* is that it's coming Stateside. Yep, by the time you read this, Sega should have announced their intention to port this game our way sometime in the 1st Quarter 2K; poor Atlus was probably too busy localizing *Ogre Battle 64* to handle it. One thing is clear, however, this marks yet another AAA title in the Dreamcast's growing killer app arsenal. With games like *Sonic Adventure, Soul Calibur, Power Stone, Virtual On: Oratorio Tangram, Frame Gride, Chu Chu Rocket*, etc., Sega is more than ready for whatever challenges the PS2 throws its way. Now I just hope that the "average consumer" realizes it. For now, though, I'm going to play some more *Maken X*...

When ECM isn't writing sleep-deprived reviews of incredible games, he finds time to... zzzzzzzz...

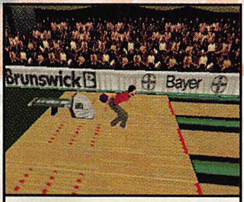




Viewpoint Score: 97	Developer - Atlus	1 Player	ECM: "X" marks the spot.
	Publisher - Atlus	Available Now Japan	

REVIEW

GameFan Sports



Brunswick Pro Bowling
Nintendo 64
THQ

Last year's *Brunswick* was an incredibly addictive experience. The Nintendo 64 version is even better, adding 64-bit graphics to the already stellar engine. Just about anyone could learn to love this game. This is a better rental than purchase, however, so don't fork out dough you could better use buying a *RE2.*

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 5 — **89**

There's something to be said about bowling games. I can't say that I'd ever buy one, but they can be really fun. This year's *Brunswick* is as good as bowling can get. Clean, well-represented graphics and a high fun factor make for a solid bowling title. It's either this or renting a cruddy pair of shoes at your local alley. Okay, let's bowl!

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — **94**



March Madness 2000
PlayStation
EA Sports

Black Ops turns in a pretty good title here, but I think they tinkered too much with the graphics and some of the controls. While this tinkering doesn't make *MM2000* a bad game, it leaves yearning for last year's verison, which I felt was the best of the college hoops sims. And would someone please lock Vitale in a box and push it in the Hudson River?

G 7 · C 7 · P 7 · M 6 · O 5 — **79**

I love b-ballin', and nothing gets my blood pumping than the school spirited college games. However, while *MM 2000* controls well, the AI makes stupid decisions, the graphics are average, and the game doesn't represent the feeling of true college hoops. Good try, Black Ops, but you've got go above the rim.

G 6 · C 8 · P 6 · M 7 · O 5 — **73**



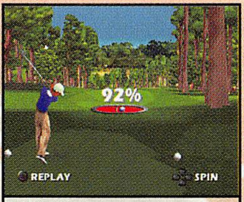
Formula 1 '99
PlayStation
Psygnosis

I hate Formula One games, which makes this review an even greater compliment to the guys behind Formula One '99. A fantastic engine under the hood is what makes this game so enjoyable. No slowdown, minimal draw in and some solid control make this a game I can strongly recommend to fans of racing sims.

G 9 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 6 — **89**

If you think *Gran Turismo 2* is going to be the last truly awesome, triple "A" PlayStation racer, you are so very wrong! Formula One '99 is what you should expect from the PS at this point! Intense speed, crisp visuals, tight control and all the real life F1 teams make this one a must buy for the hard core racing fanatic.

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — **91**



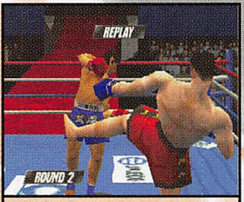
Cyber Tiger
PlayStation
EA Sports

A blatant attempt to cash in on *Hot Shots'* success, *CyberTiger* falls well short of its intented goal. Think of this game as *Hot Shots* without the good graphics, good play mechanics and great engine. With *Hot Shots 2* looming on the release horizon, there is no reason at all to purchase this game. A rental at best...

G 6 · C 7 · P 7 · M 6 · O 6 — **69**

Um... this is not good. I'm no golf fiend but I do enjoy teeing off in Hot Shots or Mario Golf. Cyber Tiger tries the same approach but inevitable fails from average PS graphics and just not being as fun. Even with the Tiger Woods name, the game tries to copy Hot Shots and Mario Golf... and doesn't quite do the job. Average at best.

G 7 · C 7 · P 6 · M 6 · O 6 — **70**



K1 Grand Prix
PlayStation
Jaleco

The original *K1 Arena Fighters* was an average game at best, so when this puppy turned out to be pretty good, I was pleasantly surprised. Better graphics are what highlight *Grand Prix,* but problems still exist in the lack of moves and stiff control. If this franchise continues to show this kind of improvement then I am stoked to see the the next!

G 7 · C 7 · P 6 · M 6 · O 7 — **76**

I never thought I'd like a game about K1 Arena Fighting, but *K1GP's* actually a cool, albeit niche, title. There's nothing quite like landing a beefy kick to the head and watching your opponent stagger from the blow. If the gameplay were a little deeper and more moves were present, this title could only get better.

G 7 · C 7 · P 7 · M 6 · O 8 — **81**

All-Star Baseball 2001

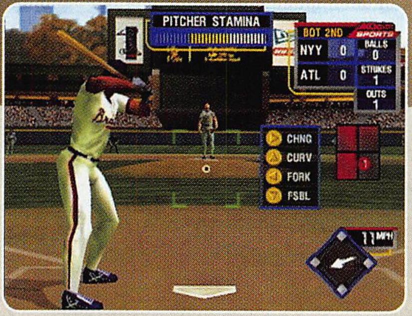
Nintendo 64 · P Preview

Developer: Iguana · Available: Spring
Publisher: Acclaim · # of Players: 1-4

I can't believe I'm already talking about baseball. It seems like only yesterday that I was watching my beloved Red Sox get their asses handed to them by the evil New York Yankees. Damn those pin striped devils... damn them to hell! I'm getting away from the subject, though, which is the newest installment in Acclaim's most impressive franchise: *All Star Baseball.*

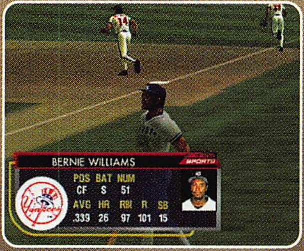
I have always held that *All Star Baseball 2000* has the best graphics of any N64 title. With the RAM pack used, it was just screaming, with an insane frame-rate, vibrant colors, and some first-rate motion capture. *ASB 2001* is as equally gorgeous but not nearly as impressive for it. It would seem that all of Iguana's tricks have been used, and while *ASB 2001* looks great, it looks only slightly better than its predecessor.

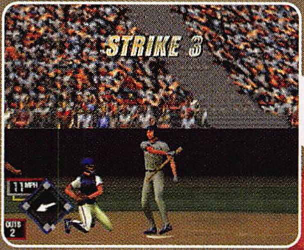
In what is the standard evolution for all sports titles, *ASB 2001* will include all the basic upgrades: more motion capture, tweaked AI, and... brace yourself... updated stats. Also, developers are working on a beefed up arcade mode where players will be able to dole out more offense and have an easier time with defense.

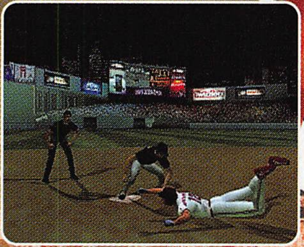


The coolest addition to *ASB 2001* is the inclusion of a Hall of Fame team. Working with Cooperstown, developers have added a team of the game's most prolific stars from the past, from Yogi Berra to Reggie Jackson to Nolan Ryan. Just how would a team stacked with these legends fare against the present day Yankees? Personally, I don't care... did I mention I hate the Yankees?

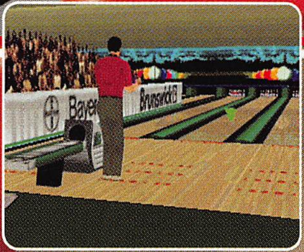
All Star Baseball 2001 promises to be another fantastic baseball sim. The real question, as always with a sports title, is whether it will have the necessary extras to warrant a purchase if you already own last year's version. **EN**



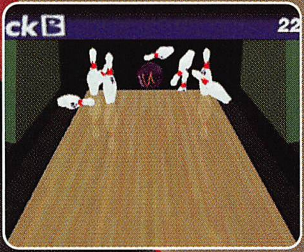




Brunswick Pro Bowling



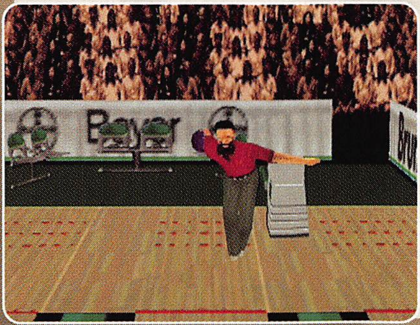




Nintendo 64 | Review | Developer: Point of View | Available: Now | Publisher: THQ | # of Players: 1-4

One of America's most popular pastimes, bowling is a great leisure activity. Nothing beats all-you-can-bowl for $10 and $2 beers—staples of my Wednesday evenings. Needless to say, I always look forward to a good bowling sim to whittle away even more time throwing balls at little white pins.

To date, my favorite bowling game has been *Brunswick Pro Bowler* for the PlayStation. I was ecstatic upon discovering that it was also making an appearance on Nintendo 64 as well. This game has all the key ingredients for an enjoyable and addictive bowling game: good graphics, stat-tracking, and really solid gameplay.



Now this game is obviously not for all of you. There are no exaggerated physics, special moves, or wacky codes. *Brunswick Bowling* is all about creating your bowler and hitting the Amateur and Pro Circuits. The ball and pin physics are stellar, perfectly complementing each other and resulting in the most realistic bowling on console. Each pin has so many contact points (Rain Man couldn't even count them all) making every collision as accurate and varied as possible.

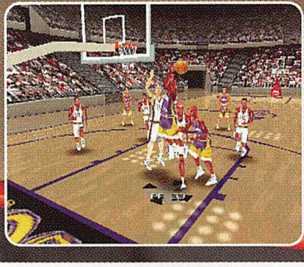
The music adds a great deal of ambiance, and the sound effects (dig that crash of the ball against the pins) make the play experience feel like you were really at the alleys. While the create-a-player is not as detailed as those found in other sports sims, it still gives you enough variety to make your own group of motley bowlers.

Brunswick Pro Bowling is tons of fun and definitely worth checking out, even if you think it sounds like a boring game. I'm pretty sure that its addictive qualities will infect you as much as they have me... well, maybe not *that* much... **EN**

March Madness 2000







PlayStation | Review | Developer: Black Ops | Available: Now | Publisher: EA Sports | # of Players: 1-8

I voiced some concerns in the preview that Black Ops may not be able to pull off a sports title—and after seeing *Knockout Kings 2*, I became even more leery... Thankfully, my fears were mostly unfounded. *March Madness 2000* continues the string of good college sims from EA.

So what's different from last year's version and this? The most obvious change is graphics. While some in the office think the change was for the better, I disagree. I really liked how *March Madness 99* looked, and it saddens me to see it change. Still, the quality of the graphics is good, despite the iffy frame-rate.

Can I just say right now that I absolutely despise Dick Vitale? His little sayings and obnoxious voice are one of the main reasons I won't watch college hoops on the tube... this overly excited midget's voice is all over the place in *March Madness 2000*. Doh! This is not to say that the commentary is bad, because from a technical standpoint, it is adequate. Some lines repeat themselves too much (if you block multiple shots in a row, expect to be annoyed), and the lack of a good second makes me yearn for *NHL 99*. But hey, if you like Vitale, you'll be in heaven.

The gameplay is solid, with responsive control and a good handle on the mechanics of basketball. The AI makes the game challenging and intuitive, with the computer putting up a good fight and your players filling their roles properly.

The Dynasty Mode has been given even more depth, allowing you to mess around more with the blue chips and coaching aspect of recruiting. Returning to the game is the addition of the women's teams. Don't expect much dunking, but playing as Tennessee and NC State is still a bunch of fun.

March Madness 2000 is a quality basketball sim that will hold the interest of any gamer looking for a college sports fix. Once again though, I have to go back to the ever important question, "Does it offer enough over last year's version to warrant another purchase?" Answer: not really, but those of you that didn't play *MM99* will definitely want to check it out. **EN**

Formula 1 1999

PlayStation R Review Developer: Studio 33 Available: Now Publisher: Psygnosis # of Players: 1-2



I could easily dismiss this title as another Formula 1 game that lacks personality... another one of those Formula 1 games that wastes valuable shelf space where another *Monster Rancher 2* or *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* could be. I could say either of these things but I won't. Why? Because this Formula 1 game is actually fun to play!

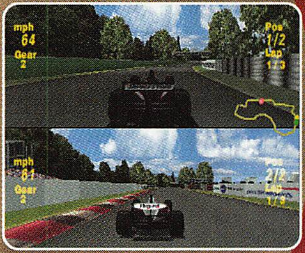
What will be obvious right from the get-go is this game's graphics. *Formula 1 '99* is a beautiful racing title with a clipping plane of such incredible distance that it seems impossible running on the PlayStation. You will see no draw in, people.

However, you will notice the game's speed right away. I dare say that *F1 '99* actually makes Formula 1 car racing fun (now there's something I thought I'd never, ever say) with its high-speed action. The physics, too, are quite impressive, delivering a solid facsimile of the real thing. The scorching engine (something that most games on the PlayStation are in dire need of) suffers nary a hiccup, even with several cars on the screen at once.

The rest of the game is fairly cookie cutter. All of the licensed teams and drivers are present, as well as all of the circuits' courses. Also included in *Formula 1 '99* is the brand spankin' new Malaysian street course. Yeehaw... I think.

Formula 1 '99, of course, has all the same features found in every other licensed racing title. What brings this game to the next level is its amazing engine... and this will make all the difference. Even those that shun this sport (and that includes myself) will want to check this one out. **EN**







F1 World Grand Prix

Dreamcast P Preview Developer: Video Systems Available: 1st Qtr. Publisher: Video Systems # of Players: 1-2





The United States, like the rest of the world, is completely infatuated with motor sports. Indy and stock car racing are premiere events, raking in millions of dollars through corporate sponsorship and merchandising tie-ins. F1 racing, on the other hand, is what the other 5.8 billion (give or take a few) of the world's population watch over the weekends. It's a shame that it's still gonna be several years before the famed F1 series hits U.S. shores. In the meantime, however, fans of the fastest sport on four wheels can look forward to two amazing F1 games: *F1 '99* by Psygnosis for PlayStation and *F1 World Grand Prix* by Video Systems for Dreamcast.

Considering both titles are excellent, you'd be more than hard-pressed to pick the better of the two. But, if it's a visual tour de force you're after, the choice is obvious. In all honesty, there's not a whole lot to an F1 game. Basically a mixture of fast straightaways with a bunch of ridiculous turns behind every corner. Having a true understanding of how to properly rocket into a turn without completely wiping out isn't easy. And that's why many gamers tend to shy away from F1 titles... they're generally very difficult.

The minute you pop *Grand Prix* into the DC, the level of detail and graphical excellence become quite apparent. The super crisp FMV intro showcases several of today's hottest team cars (Ferrari... it's all about Ferrari!) and helps rev players up as they enter either a standard season or single player race. As always, adjustments can be made to help tone down the learning curve. And I don't care what your friends say, computer-assisted braking is nothing to be ashamed of.

"But what about vehicle setup?" you ask. Not content with your current performance ratings? No problem. Tire type, front wing, rear wing, gear ratio, suspension, brake sensitivity, and brake balance can all be tuned on a sliding scale. A virtual graph will also show your car's exact telemetry readings for braking, engine revs, acceleration, etc...

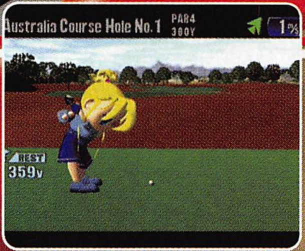
Contrary to popular belief, *F1 WGP* on the DC is not a port of the upcoming *F1 WGP II* for N64 (in Japan and Europe). Though Video Systems and Paradigm produced that game, only Video Systems had a hand in the development of this game. The fact that *WGP* is not a mere port of the N64 version might explain why it looks so damn good. It was, from the ground up, developed exclusively for the DC. Textures on tracks and car models are too pretty to ignore, and engine sounds appear to be sampled from real life F1 events.

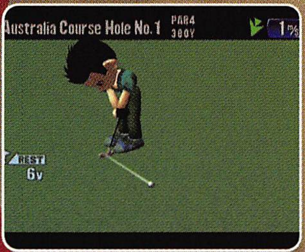
F1WGP is an excellent DC title. It's a genre that requires significant time and effort to become competent in, and even longer to get good at. If time is on your side, definitely check it out, and for everyone else... I hear *Monaco GP* and *Flag to Flag* make for nice soft drink coasters. **Fury**

Tee-Off

P Preview

Developer: Bottom Up Available: Feb.
Publisher: Acclaim # of Players: 1-4

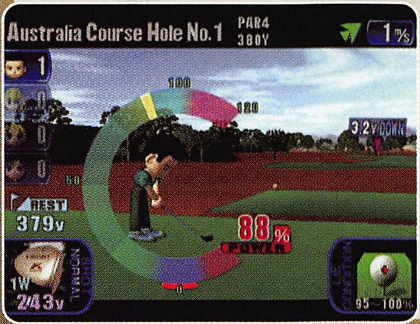






Tee Off almost makes me forgive Acclaim for *WWF Attitude*... almost. This shiny happy title from Japan is a welcome sight on the Dreamcast, the only console yet to be overrun by golf games. So this one is actually needed to fill out an ever-growing sports library.

While the game is still early, it's nonetheless promising. Essentially nothing more than a *Hot Shots* clone with really clean graphics, *Tee Off* is aimed not only at the golf fan, but the idle gamer as well, looking for an addictive title to burn away their lives on.



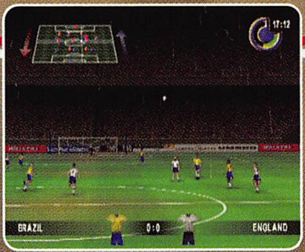
Everything about *Tee Off* screams *Hot Shots*, and this is a very good thing. The game will incorporate a fairly simple swing mechanism, some inventive courses, and incentive to keep playing beyond just finishing a round or tour. As you play, you're rewarded with unlockable characters and, hopefully, some cool courses; better sets of clubs would be welcome too, but don't hold your breathe (remember *Jack Nicklaus Golf* on the Genesis? It was all about earning those ceramic clubs...). One addition of interest is a croquet-type game that makes for a great multi-player experience.

The game, when finished, will run at 60 fps and experience not even a hiccup in scrolling. It seems like more could be done with the backgrounds and maybe some nice arcade-style effects, but *TO* still looks beautiful, even if they opt to leave the graphics as is. I am excited about this title. Knowing how many hours were wasted trying to get all of the golfers in *Hot Shots*, I can totally see myself succumbing to the same obsessive behavior playing *Tee Off*. **EN**

World League Soccer 2000

P Preview

Developer: Silicon Dreams Available: Mar.
Publisher: South Peak # of Players: 1-4







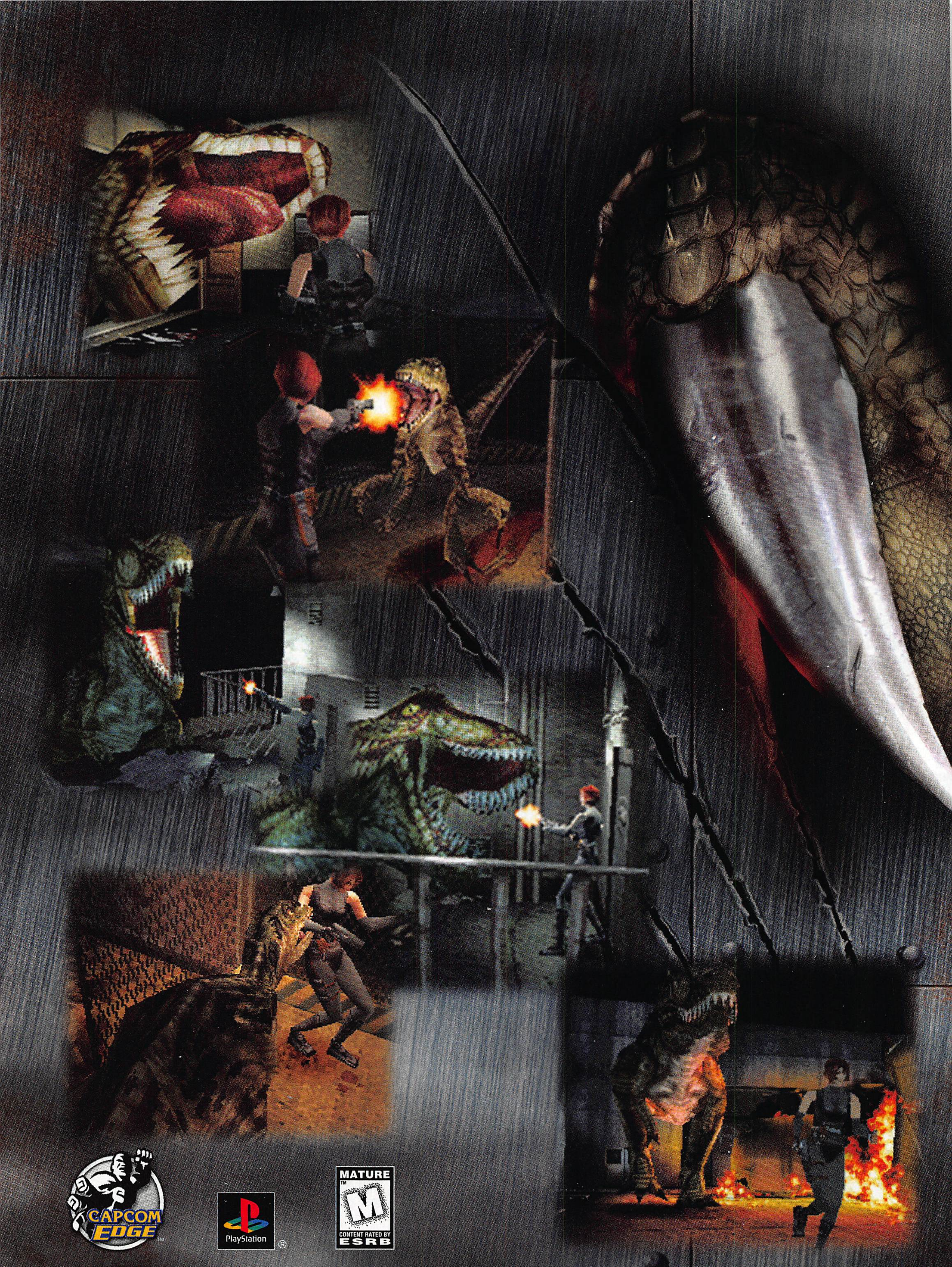
Over 200 teams from around the world including, get this, all of the clubs from Italy and Hungary. I know what you're thinking—this is too good to be true. Where else could a soccer fan go to get all of his favorite teams from insignificant European countries? Actually, just about anywhere...

I'll stop being obnoxious (for now) because I will not attack a preview version of a game that is no more guilty of lack of imagination than any other sports title. The sad truth is that most of today's sports titles lack even the smallest iota of originality; made even worse by the fact that the envelope has been pushed about as far as it can be on the older systems. What you're left with is a glut of cookie-cutter titles. Alas, what can we expect from South Peak's *World League Soccer 2000* that may break the streak?

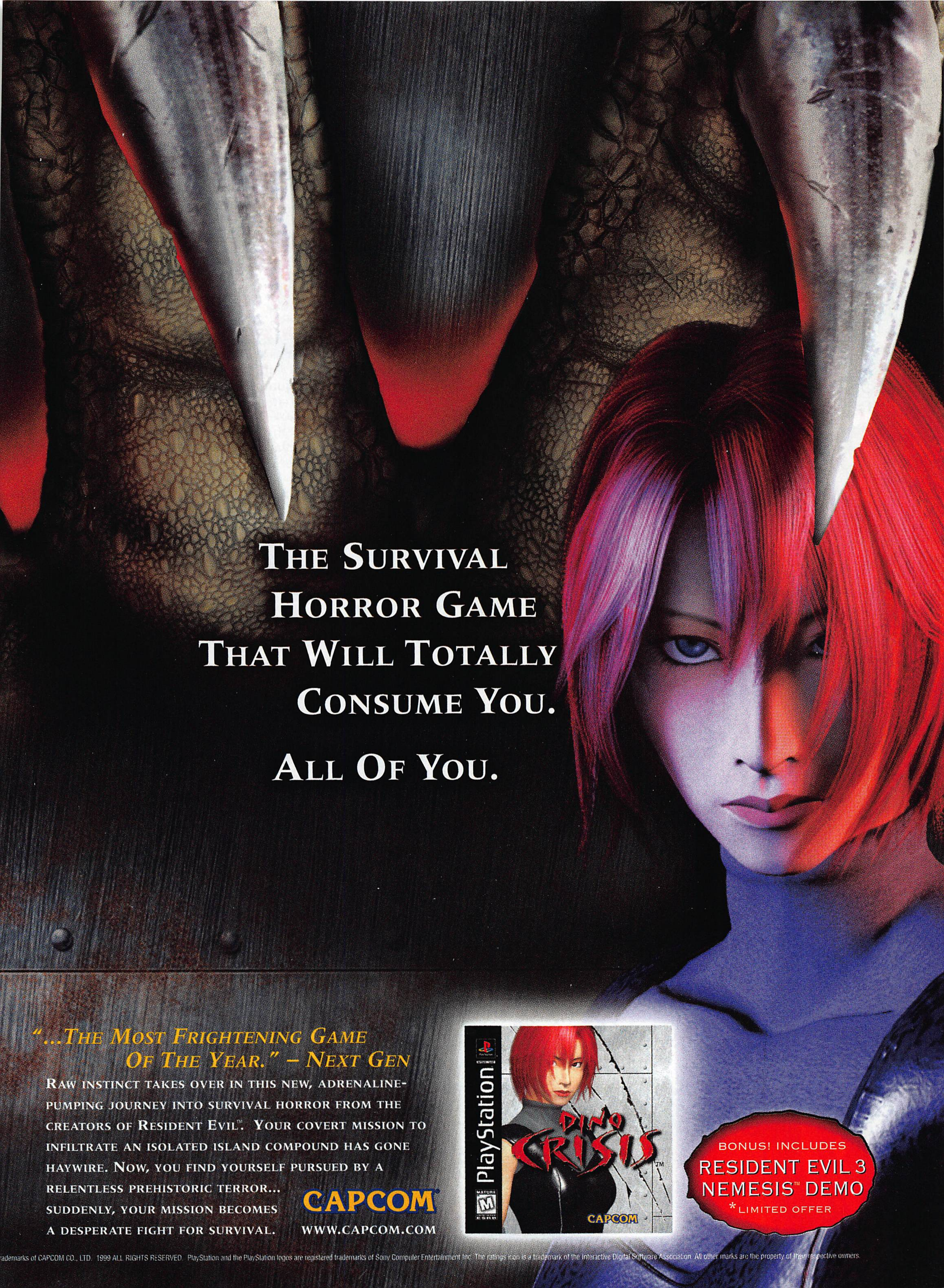
Not much it would appear. This early version of *WLS2000* appears to be mired in the same doldrums as every other soccer sim out there. Aside from the aforementioned 200 futbol teams from around the world, *WLS2000* features little more to inspire me. There is, of course, the standard motion captured players, weather conditions, coaching options, and commentary (supplied this time by Peter Brackley and Ray Wilkins). The game features several modes of play, allowing you to do anything from playing an exhibition match against your most hated rival, to entering a tournament to see whose team can boast being "Best of the World."

One bright spot is a set of special moves to spice up the gameplay. To show your mad skillz, you're given 23 combos to pull off, adding much needed variety to a genre that has little else to do other than pass, shoot, and head.

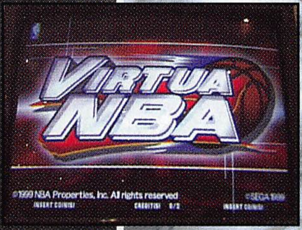
World League 2000 will probably end up being a solid soccer sim when finished; it certainly has all of the components. There is little reason to get too jazzed about it, though, considering it may not offer much in the way of originality. Maybe if one of those combos ended in a dragon punch, starting a crowd riot... now that would be a welcome breath of fresh air! **EN**



CAPCOM EDGE
PlayStation
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB


THE SURVIVAL HORROR GAME THAT WILL TOTALLY CONSUME YOU.
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RAW INSTINCT TAKES OVER IN THIS NEW, ADRENALINE-PUMPING JOURNEY INTO SURVIVAL HORROR FROM THE CREATORS OF RESIDENT EVIL™. YOUR COVERT MISSION TO INFILTRATE AN ISOLATED ISLAND COMPOUND HAS GONE HAYWIRE. NOW, YOU FIND YOURSELF PURSUED BY A RELENTLESS PREHISTORIC TERROR... SUDDENLY, YOUR MISSION BECOMES A DESPERATE FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL.
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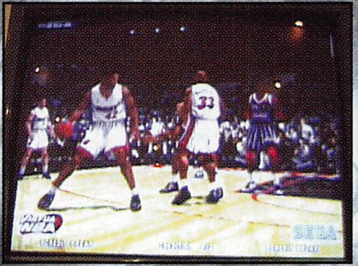
QUARTER CRUNCHERS

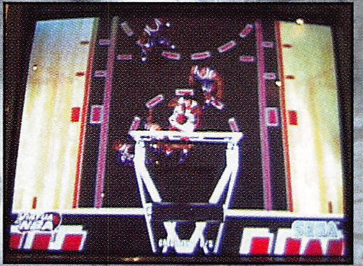


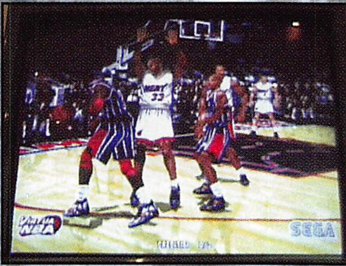












Because it's one of the more exciting sports to watch, translating the electricity of professional basketball into a video game with good control and balanced gameplay is tough. And if you try placing those ideas into an arcade game, you're biting off more than you can chew. However, if any video game company can make an arcade basketball game that captures the thrill and explosiveness of ballin', it's Sega. And though *Virtua NBA* is still pretty early, it'll prepare us for some double-pumpin', head-fakin', shot-blockin', alley-oopin' action next year in the 'cades.

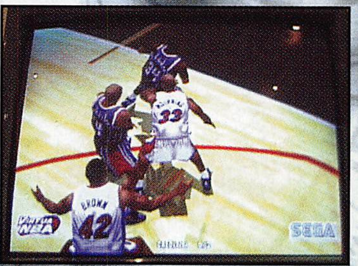
Virtua NBA

Yes, it runs off the powerful yet flexible NAOMI board, and while that pretty much guarantees bodacious visuals, you really have to see the game in full motion to realize how well the players in the game animate. Every minute detail—whether it's the shiny reflections of each player on the waxed, wood court, or the motion-captured animation of a behind-the-back pass—looks so real, it's beyond scary. The crowds are not your typical three-frames-of-animation, pixelated mess we're so used to seeing in other basketball games. They have different animations depending on the pace of the game; sometimes you can even see a few guys downing a beer! When your team's running down the court for a fast break, the crowd stands up in excitement, and when you finally dunk, the whole arena jumps up and screams approval.

While the visuals are top-notch, the game is only 40% complete. And after playing it extensively, the 60% that needs to be worked on is the gameplay. The control is pretty floaty, and as far as I've seen, there's no way to increase your speed, especially if you want to blast down the lane for a layup. The simple joystick and two button format is a bit too simple, especially since there aren't any advanced commands. You can shoot, pass, steal, and block... that's it. Fiddling around with certain joystick motions and buttons commands produced interesting results, such as a fade away shot, but the game desperately needs advanced commands or another button for speed bursts or more moves.

As mentioned above, the game is only 40% complete, and while the gameplay needs a definite tune-up, the sounds don't need to be changed at all. Everything from the squeaking rubber soles, to the blaring blowhorns from the fans, to the taunting "Charge" organ melodies... they're all melodiously authentic. The game isn't due out till middle of 1st quarter, and Sega has yet to let me down when it comes to arcade games. So despite the gameplay issues early on, I'm really looking forward to playing *Virtua NBA* when it's done. **Dangohead**



















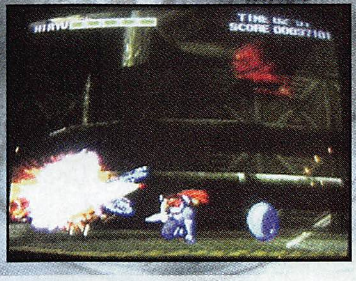







Strider 2

A list of coolest video game characters? Well, that can go on for another four or five pages. Though we have our personal favorites (Solid Snake from *Metal Gear Solid*, Tachibana Ukyo from *Samurai Shodown 2*, Duke Togo from *Golgo 13*, and that 'mountain' thing from *Battle Balls*...), I think we can all agree that Strider is way up there. His uniform and red scarf... the way his sword sounds as if it could cut though 12 inches of cinderblock like so much butter... his hang glider... Why not resurrect him in an intense, action arcade game? Well, to prove once and for all that Capcom loves their fans, *Strider 2* is in the works with a hopeful U.S. release to come.




After a few months of adding new levels, a slight graphical facelift, and a massive injection of adrenaline, *Strider 2* has returned, and it's come a long way from its E3 incarnation. First off, you have the option of choosing three different missions, and depending which mission you finish, others will open up. The levels aren't that complex—just run through them, hacking and slashing enemies till you meet the final boss. With the new 3D backgrounds, environments will slant at different angles, or completely turn around as the action becomes more and more intense. Essentially, it's still a 2D game at heart, so don't worry about getting lost in *Strider 2's* world. The graphics have been improved, though there are still pixelated items, and certain enemies have caught the "two frames of animation" virus.




As far as gameplay goes, if you liked the first *Strider*, then the sequel has a lot to offer. All of his patented moves (e.g., sliding, wall-climbing, double jumping) are present, and two additional ninja skills have been acquired by our scarlet-scarfed swordsman. First off, Strider has a new jumping attack: jump and perform a down-up motion on the stick followed by attack. Strider will draw his sword and swing in every direction, like an offensive shield.

Secondly, while Strider doesn't have any cyborg pets or infamous ouroboros, he can collect booster packs. You can release the power of this pack anytime by pressing the booster button. Once this happens, a meter will appear below Strider's lifebar. The boost power-up adds an extra energy wave every time you attack. This meter will slowly deplete over time or with every attack. Other than those two additions, everything else, gameplay-wise, remains true to *Strider's* roots—a welcome relief to those looking forward to the sequel. **Dangohead**

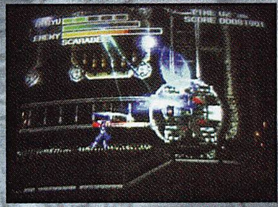











"The Critics have Spoken on the Action / Adventure Game of the Year!"





"A technical achievement...Soul Reaver delivers an epic piece of vampiric literature...93%"
– IGN.com

"Soul Reaver is a deep game possessed with a myriad of impressive little touches...9/10"
– VideoGames.com

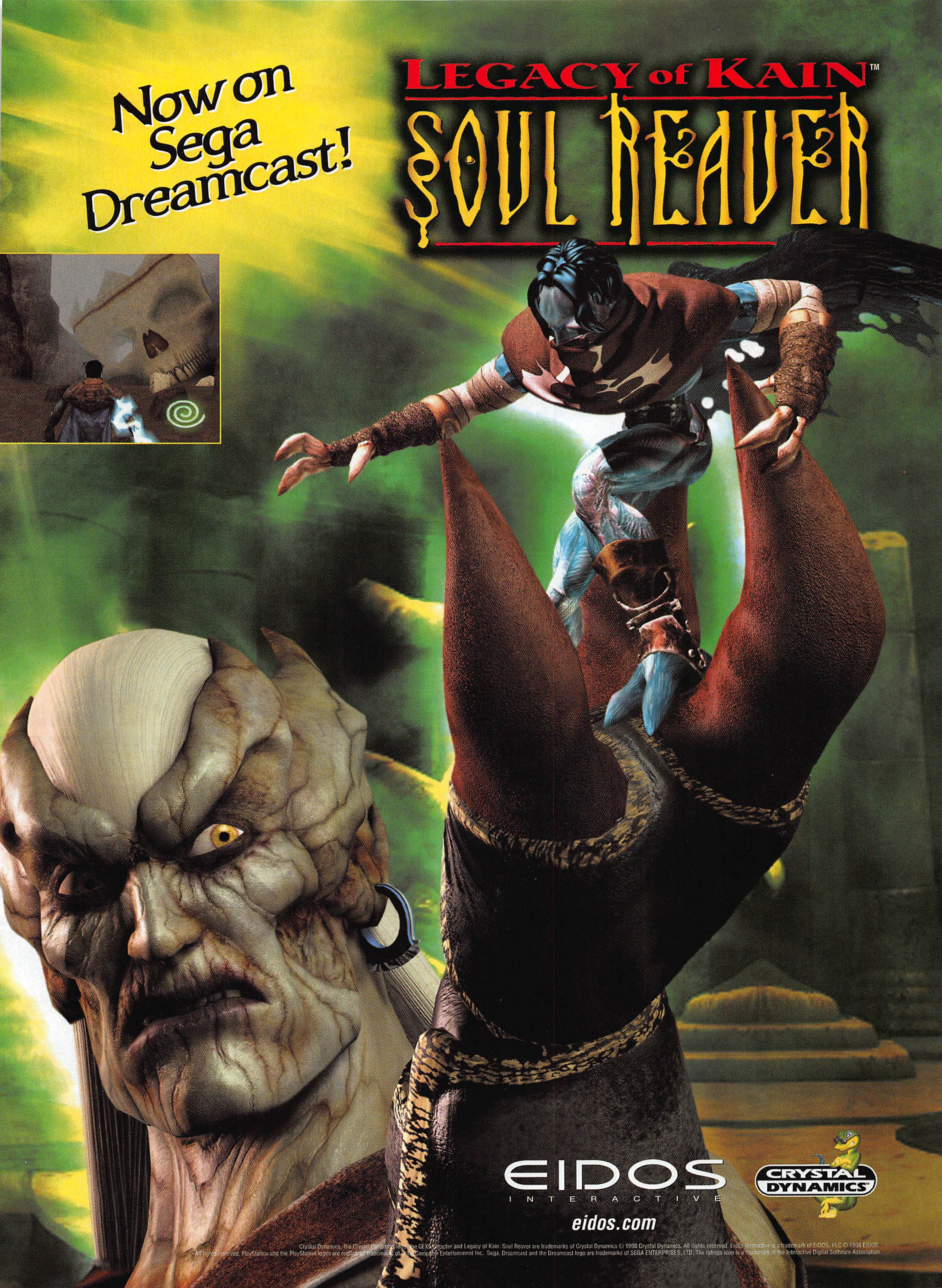
"3D exploration and adventure at its finest...Game of the Month."
– Expert Gamer Magazine

"Soul Reaver's environment's are jaw dropping."
– Gaming-Age.com

"98%"
– PS Extreme Magazine

- As Raziel, stalk Nosgoth feeding on the souls of your enemies
- Engage your creator, Kain, in an epic struggle for dominance
- Dark gothic story
- No load times

PlayStation MATURE M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB PC CD ROM Sega Dreamcast

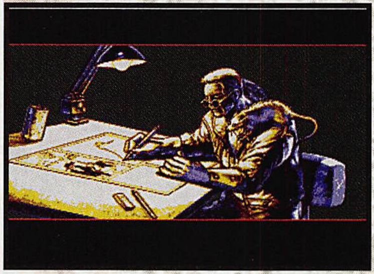

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COMI
ZON

Graveyard

If there's one thing you couldn't accuse Sega of in the later days of the Genesis, it was a lack of creativity. In fact, the entire 32X platform could have been built around the mantra 'we like really weird, off-the-wall games' with a whole unreleased library of really odd titles (yet again I feel the need to reference *Virtua Hamster* in the magazine). However, of those amazingly unique and über-creative titles, one really stood out from the pack—Sega Technical Institute's *Comix Zone*. This American-made gem never really made the impact it should have (again you had *GameFan* blaring the call-to-arms...and again it was nigh-summarily ignored) and now resides once and forever in the Graveyard...







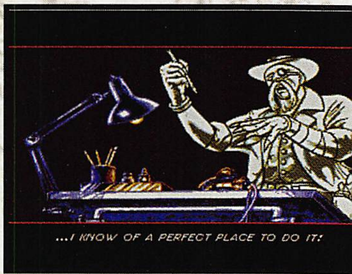




You are Sketch Turner, ultra-hot comic artist, doodling away on a dark and stormy night. Lightning strikes and next thing you know, you're inside your own comic book, battling the various villains drawn from your own imagination—that's the story in abbreviated form. *CZ* is a side-scrolling beat-'em-up. You know, the type your mom used to make on those lazy Sunday afternoons—*Double Dragon*, *Final Fight*—heck, even good ol' *Zombie Revenge* is essentially part of that elite class of old school gaming.

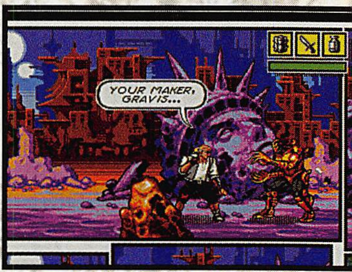
Comix Zone was a revelation on the nearly-ancient Genesis hardware of the day. As was often the case, its meager color palette was stretched to its very limits and featured animation that would make Capcom look twice—not too shabby for a console in the twilight of its years and from an American development squad at that (take that, Otaku!). Sketch, his foes, and even little Roadkill (his pet rat and sidekick) were truly a sight to behold, with the aforementioned animation rivaling arcade titles of the day.

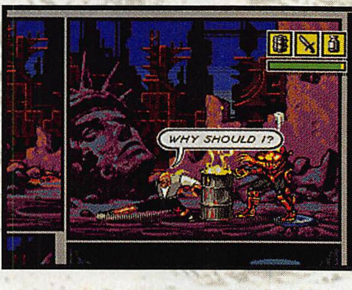
Sketch would wend his way [Eggo's note: "wend?" Once again, ECM tries to resurrect the English language, one dusty word at a time] across comic pages, broken up by panes in traditional comic book style. He'd leap into a window, dispatch whatever foes or puzzles lurked within, and then move on to the next. It was simple, but it was sheer genius from an aesthetic point of view and a nice departure from the burned-out city found in nearly every other game in the genre till that point (though I guess the setting for this game is a comic book burned out city...<grah>).



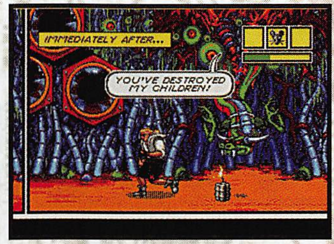


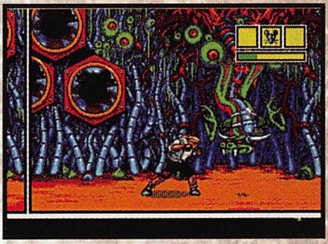








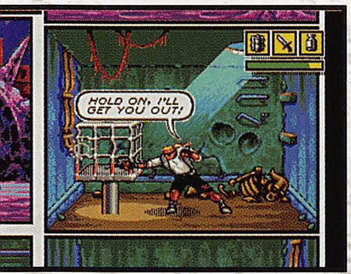










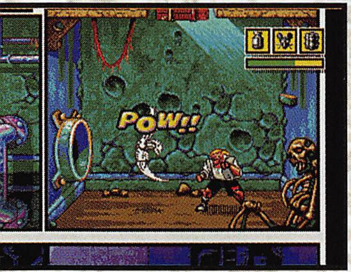


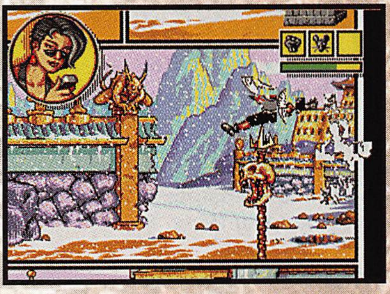


Sketch himself had access to the standard repertoire of side-scrolling beat-'em-up moves including uppercuts, kicks, and knees to the chest. As the game progressed, he became more proficient and even 'morphed' (lord how I hate that early '90s phrase) into a super-heroic form that would take vengeance on all foes on the screen at one time (by ripping chunks out of the page). Sure, he was a glorified smart bomb, but it looked really stunning and that's what matters, right?

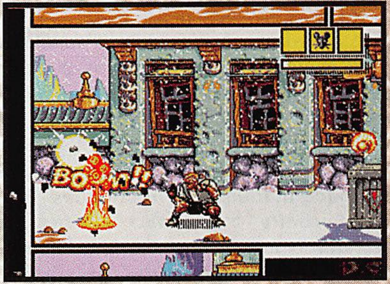
Speaking of ripping chunks, by employing Roadkill at strategic puzzle-points, he'd help Sketch along his way in beating the snot out of Mortus (the arch villain) and his legion of DC rogue's gallery rejects like Stygil. Everything from flipping out-of-reach switches, to 'tearing' the comic page to reveal valuable pick-ups was all in a day's work for the intrepid rat.

"...a revelation on the nearly-ancient Genesis hardware..."

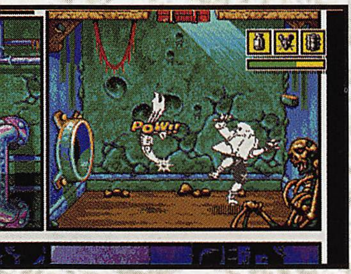


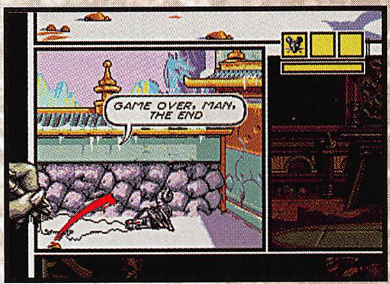


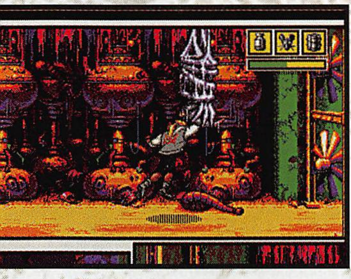


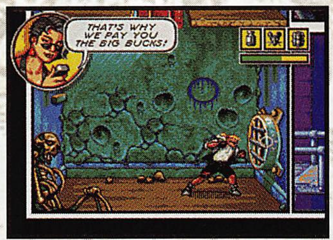


Essentially, *CZ* is one of the single most underrated Genesis games ever crafted. It didn't help that in true Sega fashion (a la the Genesis days), it was one of hundreds of amazing titles that received little or no ad support. In fact, the single most galling aspect for those of us that loved the game, is that a Saturn rev was in the works. However, after the first didn't exactly sprout wings and lunge from the shelves into waiting gamers' hands, and Sega of America slowly slid into a pit with Saturn, the game was canceled. Which is a real shame. I can just imagine (and that's all I'll be doing, apparently) what kind of power could have been brought to bear on a blazing, 32-bit edition of this amazing game—and conceivably looking forward to the first Dreamcast chapter, <sigh>. **ECM**

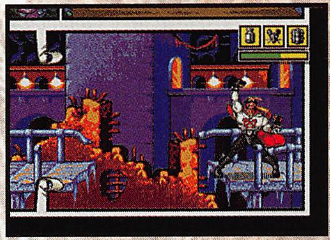












AnimeFan

Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

Well, if you ever read this little rant, hopefully it will be this month's. ADV has released five volumes of the ***Original Dirty Pair*** OAVs, and the future of the original Kei and Yuri in the US is now up to you. If sales of the OAVs are good enough, ADV will bring us more, such as the TV series and re-releasing the movies. However, if sales aren't good enough, such a deal seems unlikely. ***Dirty Pair*** is a true anime classic, and deserves to be treated well in the US. So, if you listen to nothing else I say, I hope you all will give this series a chance, and if you like it, SUPPORT IT! It's up to us to what the future holds for the Lovely Angels. Oh, of course, ***WWF2K***. Awesome game. Not perfect, but really really good. My character (Cthulu) and his valet Miss Congeniality (who will be in the WWF by the time you read this) are going all the way baby! Until later! ^_^

Special Feature

Get Familiar with Gundam Wing

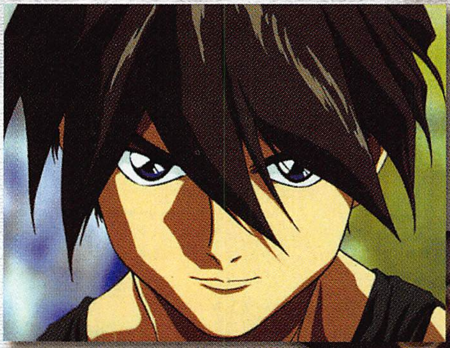
Mobile Suit Gundam—there are a few names that will forever be reference marks of Japanese animation, and ***Gundam*** indeed holds one of the top spots on such a list. ***Gundam*** isn't just an anime anymore, it's a culture, a religion, a way of life, much in the same way that something like ***Star Wars*** or ***Star Trek*** are over here. Now, the next wave of the ***Gundam*** saga is preparing to hit our shores: welcome to ***Gundam Wing***.

The Story

I'm a total newbie when it comes to ***Gundam Wing***, so I'm going to be cheap here and just take the story synopsis directly from Bandai's ***Gundam Wing*** press release:

Centuries in the future, Earth is surrounded by orbiting space colonies. The colonies' inhabitants are cruelly oppressed by the Earth Alliance, which uses huge humanoid fighting machines called "mobile suits" to control the populace. These mobile suits are manufactured by the powerful industrial combine known as the Romefeller Foundation. Through it subsidiary, the Oz secret society, the Romefeller Foundation has infiltrated the Alliance military and steered it towards its repressive course. Now the space colonies are ready to strike back. Five young pilots, equipped with advanced mobile suits called "Gundams," are sent to Earth to wage guerrilla war against Oz and its Alliance puppets.

Four of the five Gundams reach Earth safely, but one is intercepted as it enters Earth's atmosphere, and Gundam pilot Heero Yuy is forced to abandon his mobile suit at sea. As he emerges onto dry land, a girl named Relena Darlian spots Heero. His orders demand that he kills this accidental witness, but events take a very different course. The Gundam pilots soon find that they have played into the hands of cunning Oz leader Treize Khushrenada, inadvertently plunging the world into a chaotic civil war. Relena, meanwhile, learns her true identity and sets out to rescue humanity from its nightmare of tyranny and war. Will the Gundam pilots, raised as warriors, learn to fight instead for Relena's dream of peace?



Heero, the... er, hero of Gundam Wing

The Show

Last issue I mentioned that the Cartoon Network was picking up the rights to the ***Gundam Wing*** TV series, and now Bandai has confirmed this. Starting next Spring, ***Gundam Wing*** will become part of the Toonami line-up on the Cartoon Network. ***Gundam Wing*** is a big series, a newer title, and is undoubtedly a great catch for the Cartoon Network. As I said when I was discussing the idea of an anime channel last month, getting anime titles onto television is probably one of the most important things at this point, as it gives titles big exposure and helps us to get TV titles that we might not normally see. Of course, there is one down-



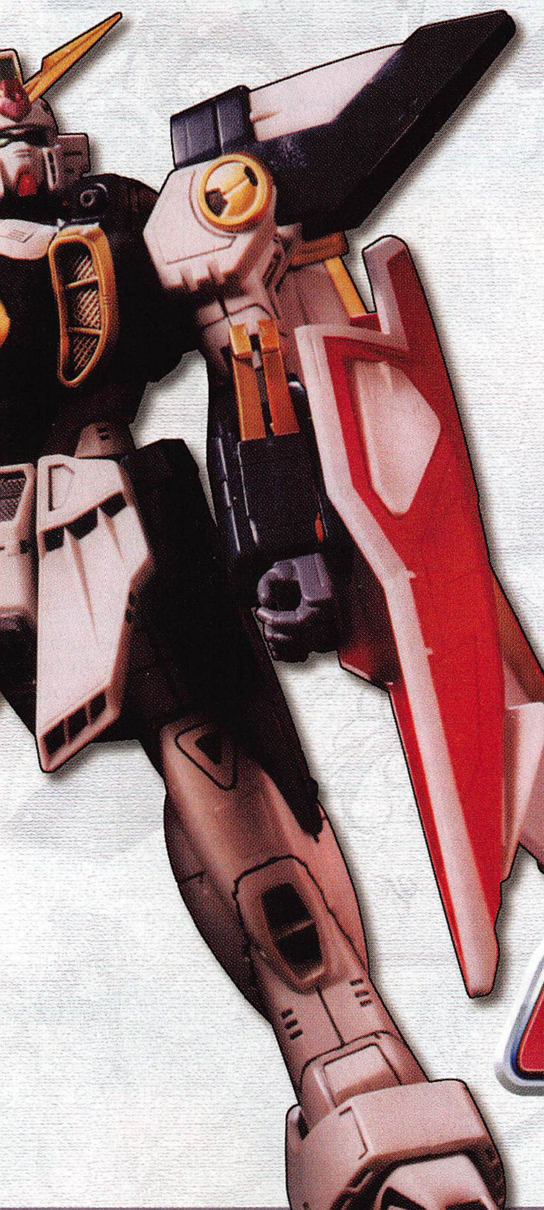
[1]5 Inches • [2]7.5 Inches • [3]HG = "High Grade"

side already about *Gundam Wing* on the Cartoon Network—the inevitable cutting of the opening. Why does the Cartoon Network do that exactly anyway?

Unfortunately, it is unknown at this time if, or when, *Gundam* will see release on home video. It's my opinion that it will no doubt be released for purchase, it just may be a question of how soon after the series begins its run on the Cartoon Network that such a release happens.

The Toys

If there is anything that can rival the popularity of *Gundam*, it's the toys and models based around the world of *Gundam*. Probably the most popular model kits in Japan, there are books, magazines, clubs, and anything else you can think of based specifically around the building and displaying of *Gundam* models. The market is so big, that there are even *Gundam*-brand markers and paints for adding the little details to your finished models.



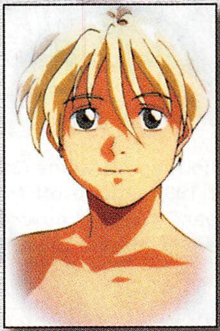
While we have sadly missed out on quite a bit of this market, Bandai is finally giving the US a taste of what Japanese fans have had for so long. Launched about two weeks prior to my writing this, Bandai and Toys R Us have teamed together to release a large collection of *Gundam Wing* model kits/toys in the US. The large fellow in the middle of this spread (who is the HG Wing Gundam mech) is just one of twenty different kits that you will be able to purchase. Two different lines will be released: the 1/144 scale[1] *Gundam* models, and the 1/100 scale[2] HG[3] *Gundam* models. If you're familiar with Japanese model kits at all, these are the type that come in a multitude of different colored pieces. Remove the pieces from their casts, snap the pieces together, and voila—a great looking model that's simple and easy to assemble. After they are together, you can then use stickers, markers, paints, or other such materials to improve or customize your Gundam to your liking.

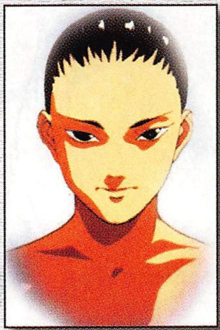
The trial run for the toys is starting in California-based Toys R Us stores, but for fans out there who can't wait for the toys to come to their local markets (in case they have not as of yet—a good timeline for a full-US release isn't available as of print time), you can purchase the toys online from the Toys R Us website.

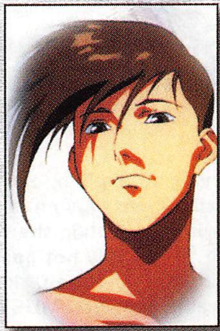
The Game

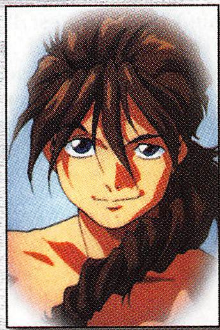
Okay, it's not based on *Gundam Wing*—but there is talk going around that the *Gundam Side Story 0079* game for the Dreamcast will also be coming our way next year thanks to Bandai. With the increase of exposure and overall products for *Gundam* that will be hitting us soon, there is no doubt that a video game would be a wanted product, so it would make sense for Bandai to provide this as well.

The translation of *Gundam Wing*, the release of the *Gundam Wing* toys, and the possible US release of the Dreamcast *Gundam* game is but another step that Bandai/Anime Village has taken to try to bring the phenomenon of Gundam to realization in the US. For too long, *Gundam* was ignored on our shores, and now we are thankfully finally beginning to catch up. If *Gundam* continues to find a following in the US, I can assure you that we haven't seen anything yet. *—shidoshi*









MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM W WING

the King of Anime

ダ・キング・オブ・アニメ・'99

FOUR GO IN. ONLY ONE COMES OUT.

The King of Anime '99—the four biggest US anime releases of 1999 square off for the title of "the best release of the year." We"re now halfway through—***Perfect Blue*** and ***Tenchi Forever!*** have given it their all, and this month is the dark horse in the running, ***Lain***. Will ***Lain*** come from nowhere and win an upset victory? I'll be seeing the US theatrical release of ***Princess Mononoke*** days after writing this, so next month, the last of the four will be put under the spotlight. Until then—here's ***Lain***.









Anime Drive-In

Serial Experiments Lain

AF Best of the Issue!

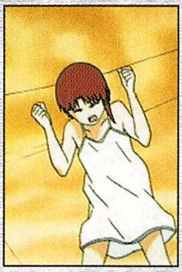
Drama • TV Series (13 eps) • Pioneer • 14+ • - min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

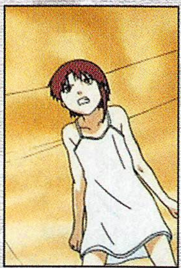
A+

Trying to explain, or sum up, the storyline behind ***Serial Experiments Lain*** in a few short sentences would be like trying to explain the history of mankind in ten minutes. So, I'm simply not going to try—besides, it's better that I not spoil anything. Instead, I'm going to explain to you exactly why you MUST see this series. You must see ***Lain*** because it is, in one single word, wonderful. No, actually, wonderful doesn't even begin to describe it. ***Lain*** could best be describe as one of those rare, stunning dreams that we all have from time to time. A dream where what makes sense one moment doesn't the next, where we never know what to expect, yet this world so strange is also so beautiful and mysterious that we never want to wake up. If we could take all of the moments in time that we experience in our dreams, and visualize them through a physical medium, they would be ***Lain***. ***Lain*** is also a testament to its creators, who must have written out a script and plan as big as a phone book in order to have this series make sense in the end.

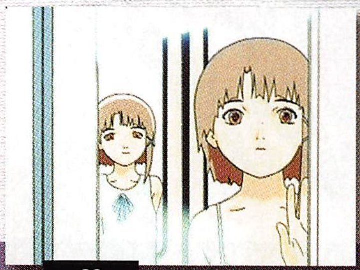
I'm very tempted to declare ***Lain*** the single best looking anime DVD out there. In some of the scenes in this show, I honestly had to tell myself that I really wasn't seeing a picture of the quality that I thought I was seeing, and that if indeed I was, how in the world could anime ever look better than this? ***Lain*** on DVD is such an experience, such a testament to why anime and DVD were made for each other, that you may never be able to watch anime on VHS again—or, at the very least, without telling yourself how horrible it looks. ***Lain*** also succeeds in another visual area: computer graphics. While I'll be the first to say that CG doesn't belong in 99% of the anime out there, the creators of ***Lain*** knew how to use it right, and in doing so, created some insane visuals that are unrivaled among anime. That's not even including the fabulous direction, the stunning artwork, and silky smooth animation, all of which are done in a stylized and downright spooky manner. ***Lain*** isn't all looks, though—***Lain*** sounds great as well, from the crystal clear clarity pouring from the DVD to the "it fits yet it doesn't" musical score. Damned if I haven't had the intro song stuck in my head since the very first time I heard it..







Doing this job, I've seen a LOT of anime—new favorites, new surprises thankfully still coming along from time to time. Yet ***Serial Experiments Lain*** has so impressed me, so blown me away, and so shown me that I can still be caught off-guard and surprised by an anime that I've got to question what future title can have such an impact. This is the series that other companies dream of releasing, and fans dream of owning. Many of you simply won't "get" ***Lain***—but for those who do, what a world of wonder and amazement lies in store for you. —***shidoshi***





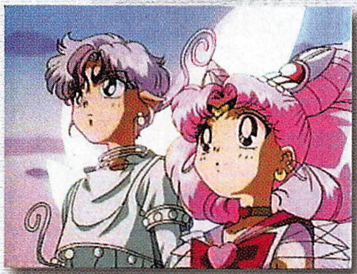






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Sailor Moon SS: The Movie

Mahou Shoujo • Movie • Pioneer • 13+
60 min • Sub | **Dub** • VHS | LD | **DVD**

B

A strange phenomenon has been occurring all over the world, as whole towns of children disappear in the middle of the night. Quite a ways away, Usagi and Chibi-Usa have an argument one day over who is the better cook when it comes to baking snacks. Chibi-Usa, knowing she is the better cook, makes a batch of cookies to take to Mamoru to prove to him her superiority over Usagi. On the way there, she meets a strange young boy named Peruru, who she gives the cookies to instead. That night, the people who have been capturing all of the children come to Tokyo, and one of their victims is Chibi-Usa. Usagi and the Sailor Scouts make the scene, but they aren't strong enough to save Chibi-Usa from being kidnapped. Can the strange young Peruru help lead the Sailor Scouts to where the children have been taken, and will Sailor Moon and the Scouts have the strength to defeat the evil they will find there?

Between the two ***Sailor Moon*** movies that I've seen (***R*** and ***Super S***), my first thought is to say that ***Super S*** is the more enjoyable. The flow for the most part feels quite smooth (with only a few bits where it felt like things were rushing too much), and there weren't really any times when the movie seemed to drag. And yet, I think that I actually liked ***R*** better—it had more of a sense of drama and urgency to it, especially the ending (and the fight scene where the Scouts get the life kicked out of them). Both movies, unfortunately, suffer horribly from "anime-movie-itus"—loved one to hero is kidnapped, hero and friends must travel to far-away place, they face a seemingly unbeatable foe, hero summons up the power to defeat unbeatable foe. The only real difference between the two movies is who gets kidnapped and what plan the enemy has for taking over the Earth. I'll be honest, though, I wasn't expecting a ground-breaking movie here, I just wanted to see ***Sailor Moon*** and the crew look cute and battle evil, and that's what I got. If you go into this movie expecting the same kind of thing you got from the television series, except with far better looking art and animation (to surprising quality at times in this film), a bit more drama and better pacing, and the chance to see ***SM*** in its original, uncut, Japanese dialog glory, then I can't see you being disappointed. If you aren't a ***Sailor Moon*** fan, however, this isn't the thing that is going to change your mind. Now, if someone can only explain ***SM***'s cheezy '70s soundtrack.. ***—shidoshi***

A Chinese Ghost Story

Adventure • Movie • Viz Video • 13+
85 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | **DVD**

B+

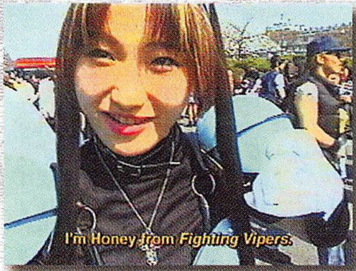
From Tsui Hark, an acclaimed Hong Kong filmmaker, comes ***A Chinese Ghost Story***. Based upon the live-action film of the same name, ***ACGS*** is the tale of Ning, a young wanderer who is simply trying to collect on some old debts. On one of his travels, he unknowingly wanders into a ghost town—a place that no living man is supposed to enter where the spirits reside. There he meets Siu Sing, a beautiful girl with a deadly secret. Siu Sing wants to be with Ning in order to steal his soul, but after he saves her from a demon hunter, her mind begins to slowly change. Can a human and a ghost find love with one another, and can a love that is not meant to be ever have a chance of surviving? While Japanese anime has gotten a strong foothold in the US market, we really haven't had much of a chance to see animation from other Asian countries. As my interest in Asian cinema grew, I always heard the name "A Chinese Ghost Story" as something that I should check out. Now that I have finally had the chance, my emotions are rather mixed. The strange thing is, this movie sort of feels to me like an American product, in its feel, style, and overall design. This really threw me off as a I watched, because it certainly wasn't what I was expecting. There was another aspect of the ***ACGS*** that instantly made me worried—its heavy use of CG. Everything you see except for the characters themselves and a few odd items are computer graphics. Yet, as I watched, I forgot about the American-esque feel, I (almost) forgot about the extreme use of CG, and I found myself becoming engrossed in the story and the characters. If you sit down, give this movie a chance, and refuse any urge to turn if off midway through, I think you'll come out at the end having enjoyed what you saw. The story is very interesting, with elements that I wouldn't have expected. The characters, as well, really grow on you, and I genuinely cared about many of them as the movie neared its end. My only real hesitation after watching is the English dub—it felt rather uncomfortable to me, as best as I can explain it. Not bad, just.. uncomfortable. So, I think that if you are willing to try something different, and can forgive the movie for its widespread CG, ***A Chinese Ghost Story*** is a beautiful tale that is worth a watch—just pick up the subtitled version or the DVD. ***- shidoshi***















Anime Drive-In

CosPlay Encyclopedia

Special • TV Special • Media Blasters • 7+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B

What exactly is CosPlay? It's a shortening of "Costume Play," the name given to dressing up as your favorite character, normally specifically for video game and anime characters. Enter the ***CosPlay Encyclopedia***, a new release from Media Blasters which gives us a look into this strange and wonderful part of fandom. Coming into this video, you should know that it is a Japanese TV special on CosPlay. Why is that important? Well, if you are used to watching Japanese TV shows, it won't be a big deal. If you aren't, however, you might be surprised at how much lower in quality this program is than your usual US television show. This video is, basically, a camera crew and your lovely host hanging out outside an anime convention and talking to some of the fans who have dressed for the occasion. Short interviews are done with each, and we get to see a nice variety of costumes ranging from the Sailor Scouts to the heroines from ***Rayearth*** to even a couple of Asukas from ***Eva***. I was a bit frustrated that so few male fans were interviewed, as in a few shots we get to see a large group of people dressed as the ***King of Fighters*** cast—I wanted to see their costumes better! The other part of this show is a series of segments that were done supposedly to help the beginning CosPlayer. We get a tour around a CosPlay shop (imagine such a shop), a list of Do's and Don'ts, and a "Top 10 Costumes" list. I'm not sure who picked this list, but I had serious disagreements with it. I was shocked and ecstatic to see Charlotte on the list, but the costume they had for her was downright horrific. I wouldn't call this "the CosPlay video I would love to see." However, since this is the ONLY CosPlay video that we have, I don't have much room to complain, now do I? Sure, it could have been better, but it's great for what it is and for the price you can pick it up at. Kudos to Media Blasters for bringing such a video over to the US, and I hope we get to see more. And hey, you get to see a large group of Japanese girls—some of whom were very cute—dressed up as video game and anime characters. I know many single male fans out there who will love this video just for that reason alone. ***—shidoshi***

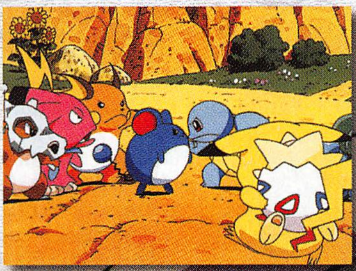
Pokemon: The First Movie

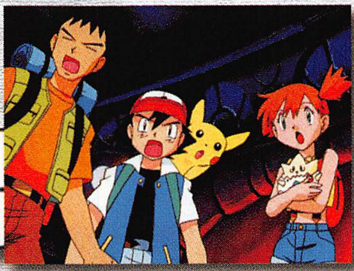
Family • Movie • Kid's WB • 7+
90 min • Sub | Dub • Theater | VHS | LD | DVD

B-



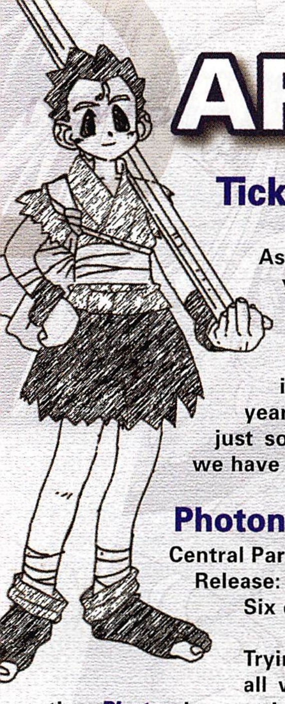
My duty as an anime editor gave me no choice but to go see the first US released ***Pokemon*** movie (trying to make you believe that he didn't want to see it), so three Poke-friendly friends and I went to partake of the event. When the movie opened, the screen was filled with a HUGE image of Pikachu, and the reality of the situation truly set in—I was sitting in a movie theater watching ***Pokemon***. Seeing any sort of anime on the big screen is somewhat of a surreal event, but there's something about seeing ***Pokemon*** in US theaters that feels even stranger. ***Pikachu's Vacation***, the "short" that is shown before the actual movie, was outrageously cute and rather funny in a weird sort of ***Pokemon*** way. It's a light-hearted tale about Pikachu and friends at a Pokemon resort, where they get into competition with a rival group of Pokemon (which includes two new Pokemon from the just-released Japanese ***Pokemon*** Gold and Silver). Then we get to ***Pokemon the Movie: Mewtwo Strikes Back***, the main event of the night. Here we find the story of the most elusive Pokemon, Mew, and the powerful mutant clone of him, Mewtwo, that humans have created. Of course, Mewtwo doesn't like the idea of simply being a slave, and decides to show the world its true power. Going into ***Pokemon:MSB***, if you've ever seen any anime movies based off of a series, then you'll know what to expect from this one—whether that is a good or a bad thing is up to you. Take an episode of the TV series, beef up the story a bit, increase the production value, animation, and artwork quality, and extend it by a half hour—the final result would be pretty close to the movie. This is exactly what kids will be looking for, so the movie does what it needs to do, and I would be lying if I said that I didn't enjoy myself. If the movie is still in theaters by the time you read this, I would recommend going to see it, if for no other reason than to see the sight of a huge Pikachu dancing around on a theater screen. ***—shidoshi***







AF News Service



Tickets to the US

As we get closer to the new year, more and more announcements are coming out as to what we US anime fans will be watching over the course of the year 2000. So, here's a look at just some of the great titles that we have to look forward to.

Photon

Central Park Media
Release: Around May 2000
Six episode OVA

Trying to describe this show at all would simply not do it justice. ***Photon*** is great in every way that it could be great—it's damn funny, the characters are cool, the art and animation is beautiful—and this will definitely be a title to look forward to next year. ***Photon*** was created by the man behind ***Tenchi Muyo***—need I say more?

Geobreeders

Central Park Media
Release: Around March 2000
Three episode OVA

The city of Ayagane is plagued by the "Phantom Cats," a group of bio-magnetic creatures who can change their shape into that of a human or a cat. In order to combat these strange creatures, a number of groups have been formed, one of which is Kagura Security. Headed up by Yuka Kikushima, this group of super crime fighters is always on the scene, so long as the price is right.

Kare Kanno

The Right Stuf
Release: Autumn 2000
TV series

The Right Stuf is one of the quieter US anime companies out there, but they already have a couple great titles planned for next year which are sure to make an impact. First up is ***Kareshi no Kanojo no Jijo*** ("His and Her Circumstances"), aka ***Karo Kanno***. Why should you know ***Kare Kanno***? Maybe for the fact that it is the next big project from Gainax, and was their next project after the hugely successful ***Neon Genesis Evangelion***. Directed by Hideaki Anno (who also directed other Gainax classics ***Evangelion***, ***Gunbuster***, and ***Nadia***), ***Kare Kanno*** originally aired on Japanese television in 1998. I've heard a number of things about this series, and if even half of them are true, we are in for a very interesting experience from ***Kare Kanno***.

Maze

Central Park Media
Release: Around May or June 2000
OVA series released first, then TV series released

The story of a young girl who wakes up one morning in bed in her bedroom—only her bedroom has been ripped from her house and transported to another world. All she remembers is her name—Maze—and finds a young princess named Mill who keeps calling her "big sister." Maze must then protect Mill-chan, and also deal with the fact that for some strange reason, she turns into a guy every night.



Geobreeders

Kimba the White Lion

The Right Stuf
Release: Early 2000
TV series

While Pioneer has brought us the ***New Adventures of Kimba***, it will be thanks to the Right Stuf that the US is once again blessed with the original 1966 ***Kimba the White Lion*** television series. Each volume of ***Kimba*** will contain four episodes, and will have a suggested price of $14.95. When you use the term "anime classic," this is truly one of the titles that should go into this category, and the Right Stuf will help fans everywhere see the series the way it was meant to be seen.

DragonBall Z DVD Delights

Thanks to Toriyama.org, some new information about upcoming ***DragonBall Z*** DVDs has come out, and the news is interesting to say the least. Seeming to have been in the planning stages for some time, Funimation is preparing to start a new release of ***DragonBall Z*** episodes on DVD with a very interesting feature—the original Japanese audio track and English subtitles! It seems that the "less edited" episodes of ***DBZ*** on the cartoon network, and the special "uncut" VHS collections were only the beginning. It sounds as if Funimation is under the mindset that if they are going to do this, they will do it right, as the subtitles will be true subtitles (and not the dreaded "dub-titles"), and the discs will have a nice little set of extras on them as well. Another interesting point is that these releases will ONLY be on DVD—no VHS. Why, you ask? Part of it has to do with rights, but another part of it has to do with the huge amount of ***DBZ*** fan-sub tapes that are floating around out there. By releasing the DVDs, dub fans will be interested in them, but fans who have fansubs will as well. The DVDs will provide far better quality than any current fansubs can, as well as contain the extras on the discs, and this will hopefully convince ***DBZ*** fans to purchase the discs to replace their fansubs. As well, Funimation is currently obtaining rights to the other ***DBZ*** movies as well. The first one we will see from them—***DBZ*** movie 4, "Super Saiyan Goku," is set to be the first dual-language ***DBZ*** DVD release from Funimation, and should hit next Spring. After that release, the TV episode DVD collection will start to come our way. Now for the one major downside to this story—Funimation's DVD collection will begin with season three of ***DragonBall Z***. The reason for this is that while Funimation has the rights to show seasons one and two of DBZ on television, they gave the rights to home video releases of any type to Pioneer Anime. So, at least for now, Pioneer's collection of English-only ***DBZ*** DVDs will have to do.




CARMAGEDDON™
CONSOLE
Nintendo® 64
Game Boy® Color
Coming soon to other platforms
Available Summer 1999
• Out-race and out-smash your opponents in the newest installments in the award-winning motorized mayhem Carmageddon™ franchise. There are no rules - just drive to survive!
• Choose from over 20 different vehicles, each with unique handling characteristics.
• Over 30 explorable levels and tracks plus all new areas to be explored.
• Huge assembly of different power-ups and weaponry including car bonuses and zombie effects.
• Total freedom to race, chase and annihilate anywhere on the map.
• Zombie pedestrians and psychotic opponents challenge players' skill and abilities.
• Single player and multi-player action.
NINTENDO64
GAME BOY COLOR
Interplay™
BY GAMERS. FOR GAMERS.™
SCi™
MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Carmageddon ©1997-1999 SCI (Sales Curve Interactive) Ltd. All rights reserved. Carmageddon, Carmageddon 64, SCI and the SCI logo are trademarks of SCI (Sales Curve Interactive) Ltd. Interplay, the Interplay logo and "By Gamers. For Gamers." are trademarks of Interplay Productions. All rights reserved. Nintendo, Nintendo 64, the "N" logo, Game Boy and Game Boy Color are trademarks of Nintendo of America, Inc. All rights reserved.

Hocus Pocus

codes, hints & strategies

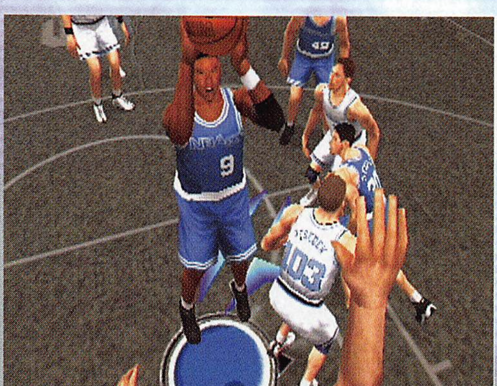
Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocuspocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

Code of the Month!

NBA 2K

Developer's Team Code

To unlock the 3 Insomniac teams(NBA 2K, SEGA Sports, and SEGA teams), enter "DEVDUDES" at the Codes screen. To disable the code, enter it again.



This month's code of the month is the developer team codes for *NBA 2K*. You see, if you look very closely at the picture to your left, the poylgon baller bears a striking resemblance to former GameFan Sports editor, Joe Kidd. Well that shouldn't be a surprise, since it is him! Look for more *NBA 2K* codes in the following section.

TrickStyle

Um... Tricky Codes! Yeah, that's it!



If you're looking for some stylish tricks (yeah, I'm clever like that) for this game, look no further! All the following codes are entered at the Cheats section in the Option screen.



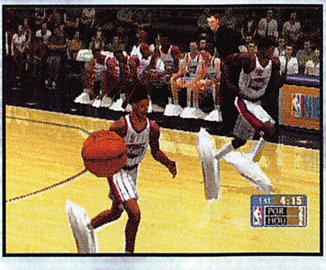
CITYBEACONS ....Win everything
TEAROUND ....Always win
IWISH ....Infinite time
TRAVOLTA ....Power-up moves
INFLATEDEGO ....Big heads



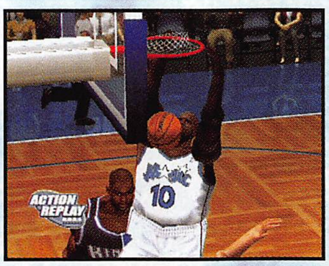


NBA 2K

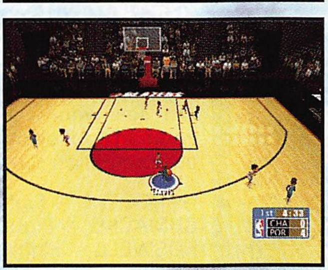
Fast Break Codes!

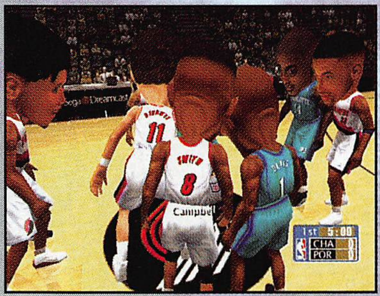


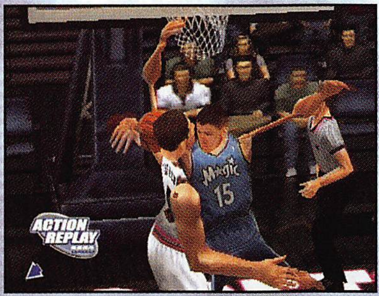
If running the pick and roll or delivering the alley-oops get boring, these codes will make the game much more interesting to watch. To enable the following codes, enter them at the Codes screen. To disable a code, enter it again.



FATHEAD ....Big headed players
LITTLEGUY ....Small players
MONSTER ....Huge players
DOUGHBOY ....Fat players
BEACHBOYS ....Big basketball
SQUISHY ....2D thin characters
COACHOUCH ....Coaches are constantly in pain
BIGFOOT ......All players have big feet
DEVDUDES unlocks the 3 Insomniac teams: NBA 2K, SEGA Sports, and SEGA teams







Toy Commander

Dynamite Codes!

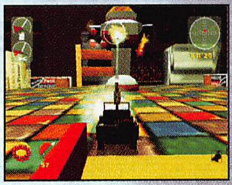


If you find yourself having a hard time getting through the large missions of this wonderful game, these codes might do the trick. All of the following codes are entered on the pause screen during gameplay. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.



All Maps
Press and hold L Shift and press A, Y, X, B, Y, X.

Heavy Weaponry
Press and hold L Shift and press X, A, Y, B, A, X.



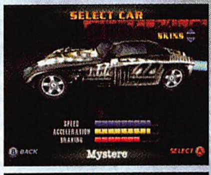
Machine Gun
Press and hold L Shift and press B, A, Y, X, A, B.

99 Heavy Ammunition
Press and hold L Shift and press A, B, X, Y, B, A.

Fix Toy
Press and hold L Shift and press A, X, B, Y, A, Y.

Speed Devils

Redlining Codes!



To perform all the following nitrous pumping codes, input the following commands during gameplay. You'll see a confirmation message appear onscreen:



All cars and tracks
Press B, →, B, →, ↑, B, ↑

Infinite nitros
Press ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑, A, X, A.



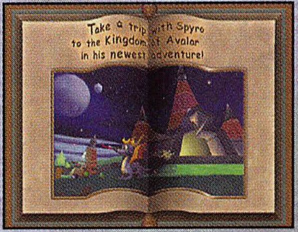
Skip current class
Press ↓, →, ↓, →, A, X, A

Extra money
Press A, →, A, →, ↑, B, A.

Crash Team Racing

Spyro 2: Ripto's Rage Demo!

Similar to the *Crash Bandicoot: Warped* code, you can now access the *Spyro 2* demo from *CTR*! At the main menu, hold L1 + R1 and press ↓, ●, ▲, →.



Grand Theft Auto 2

Gang-Related Codes!

All the following codes are entered as a player name. To enter multiple codes, backup from the player name screen, and input another code.

Level Select - ITSALLUP
All Weapons - NAVARONE
Maximum Wanted Level - DESIRES
5x Multiplier - HIGHFIVE
Infinite Health - LIVELONG
No Police - LOSEFEDS
$500,000 - MUCHCASH
10 Million Points - BIGSCORE

BoomBots

BoomBotstik Codes!

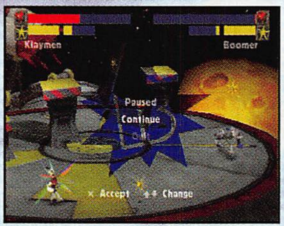
The last hurrah for the Neverhood has all the humor and quirkiness we've come to expect. And when it comes to codes, this game delivers.

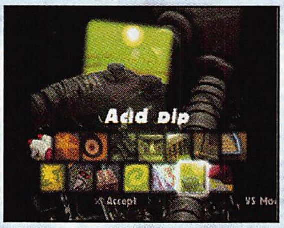
All Characters and Levels
At the BoomBot Selection Screen, press ■, ■, ■, ■, ●, ●, ●, ●, ■, ■, ■, ■, Select, Select, Select

Cheat Mode
To enable the Cheat Mode in this fighting game, press ■, ●, ●, ■, ●, ●, ■, ●, ●, ■, ●, ●, Select, Select, Select.

Now during gameplay, pause the game and press ●, ■, and ▲ simultaneously to set the CPU opponent's health to 1 or press ● and ■ simultaneously to subtract 100 from the CPU opponent's health.







BattleTanx II

Heavy Artillery Codes!

Getting pounded by mortar shells, missiles, bullets, and other things nasty and unfriendly? Well then, proceed to the Input Code screen and enter the following codes:
Level select - 8ODYS
Invincibility - HPPYHPPY
All weapons - RCKTSRDGLR









Mission: Impossible

Do The Impossible!

While most of these codes won't really help you through the game, it'll make the game very interesting to play. All the following codes are entered at the Load Game Password screen. As each code is entered all, except the FMV sequence and programmer messages code, will display the message "Bad Password". Ignore this message and start a new game.

Super jumps:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter BIONICJUMPER as a password.

Disable AI:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter SCAREDSTIFFF as a password.

Turbo mode:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter GOOUTTAMYWAY as a password.

Slow motion mode:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter IMTIREDTODAY as a password.

View FMV sequences:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter SEECOOLMOVIE as a password. You'll see a list of the FMV sequences that you'll be able to access.

Programmer message:
Select the "Load Game" option, then enter TTOPFSECRETT as a password. Messages from the programmers will scroll through.







Knockout Kings

Cool New Boxers!

Cassius against a seven-foot power forward? Well, with these codes you can see who really is the greatest! Enter the following as names at the boxer creation screen in career mode.

GARGOYLE — Fight as a gargoyle.
SHMACKO — Fight as a clown.
ROSWELL — Fight as an alien.
O — Fight as the musician who did the music for the intro FMV.
Q TIP — Fight as the rapper Q-Tip from A Tribe Called Quest.
TIM DUNCAN — Fight as the San Antonio Spur phenom.
MARLON WAYANS — Fight as the past-his-prime Marlon Wayans.
JERMAINE DUPRI — Fight as the hip-hop producer, Jermaine Dupri.
ED MAHONE — Fight as Ed Mahone, the current NABO (North American Boxing Org.) heavyweight Champion.







GameShark Codes

Grandia
PlayStation

Character 1-Infinite HP
800C0980 03E7

Character 1-Max HP
800C0982 03E7

Character 2-Infinite HP
800C0B6C 03E7

Character 2-Max HP
800C0B6E 03E7

Character 1-Infinite SP
800C09EE 03E7

Character 1-Max SP
800C09F0 03E7

Character 2-Infinite SP
800C0BDA 03E7

Character 2-Max SP
800C0BDC 03E7

Infinite Money
80010164 FFFF

Have All Magic
50003201 0000
3001066C 00FF
800106CE FFF

Psychic Force 2
PlayStation (Imp.)

Unlock All Characters & Stages
8007A15E FFFF

Infinite Energy P1
800D2038 03E8
800D203A 03E8

No Energy P1
800D2038 0000
800D203A 0000

Infinite Energy P2
800D204A 03E8
800D204C 03E8

No Energy P2
800D204A 0000
800D204C 0000

Super Strength P1
800D203C 4000

Super Strength P2
800D204E 4000

Rayman 2: The Great Escape
Nintendo 64

Infinite Health
811BC64C 001E

Have All Levels
811F1200 FFFF
811F1202 FFFF

Earthworm Jim 3D
Nintendo 64

Infinite Health
810C690E 0064

Infinite Lives
810C6912 0003

Infinite Ammo Blaster
810C6916 03E7

Infinite Ammo Rocket Launcher
810C6946 03E7

Infinite Ammo Banana Peel Bomb
810C6976 03E7

Infinite Ammo Laser
810C698E 03E7

Infinite Ammo Green Slimer
810C69A6 03E7

Infinite Ammo Chickens
810C69BE 03E7

Infintie Ammo Shotgun
810C69EE 03E7

Infinite Ammo Music Gun
810C6A06 03E7

Infinite Ammo Boomerang Knives
810C6A1E 03E7

Infinite Ammo Mushrooms
810C6A36 03E7

Max Green Marbles
810E9FF2 0064

Spyro The Dragon 2: Ripto's Rage
PlayStation

Infinite Health
8006A248 0003

Infinite Lives
8006712C 0004

Have Swim/Dive Learned
80064682 0001

Have Climb Learned
80064686 0001

Have Headbash Learned
8006468A 0001

Max Gems
800670CC FFFF

Max Orbs
3006702C 00FF

Enable Summer Forest
3006B084 0001

Enable Glimmer
3006B085 0001

Enable Idol Springs
3006B086 0001

Enable Colossus
3006B087 0001

Enable Hurricos
3006B088 0001

Enable Aquaria Towers
3006B089 0001

Enable Sunny Beach
3006B08A 0001

Enable Ocean Speedway
3006B08B 0001

Enable Autumn Plains
3006B08D 0001

Enable Crush's Dungeon
3006B08C 0001

Enable Skelos Badlands
3006B08E 0001

Enable Crystal Glacier
3006B08F 0001

Enable Breeze Harbor
3006B090 0001

Enable Zephyr
3006B091 0001

Enable Metro Speedway
3006B092 0001

Enable Scorch
3006B093 0001

Enable Shaddy Oasis
3006B094 0001

Enable Magma Cone
3006B095 0001

Enable Fracture Hills
3006B096 0001

Enable Icy Speedway
3006B097 0001

Enable Gulp's Overlook
3006B098 0001

Enable Winter Tundra
3006B099 0001

Enable Mystic Marsh
3006B09A 0001

Enable Cloud Temples
3006B09B 0001

Enable Canyon Speedway
3006B09C 0001

Enable Robotica Farms
3006B09D 0001

Enable Metropolis
3006B09E 0001

Enable Ripto's Arena
3006B0A0 000

Medal of Honor
PlayStation

One-Hit Death
8004ACBE 2400

Infinite Health
8004ACC2 2400

GameShark
InterAct

Infinite Ammo on Pickup
D00461AA A462
800461AA 2400
D007DC26 A462
8007DC26 2400

Unlock All Secret Codes
800386A0 00FF

Enable All Secret Codes
800386A4 00FF

Have All Medals
8003869C FFFF

Silent Bomber
PlayStation (Imp.)

Max Score
800E93BC FFFF

Max Shield
800E9384 03E8

Infinite Jump
800E51E4 0001

Infinite Bombs On Pick Up
800E9362 0009
800E9364 0009

Chrono Trigger
PlayStation (Imp.)

Max Money
80027D96 967F
80027D98 0098

Max Hp
30020603 00E7
80020604 E703
30020606 0003

Max Mp
30020607 0063
30020609 0063

Rocket: Robot on Wheels

Special Hocus Pocus Strategy Guide!

Sucker Punch's first title packs quite a wallop. Ingenious level design, fun gameplay, and awesome physics. Plus, every level is huge. This makes it difficult when you're trying to find all the tickets, machine parts, and items in Rocket. So, if you're having a hard time with this great game, we've got the complete walkthrough for you!

Tickets

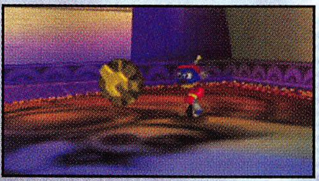
Tickets are essential in order to get further in the game. Some are just lying around, some are in mid-air (where you have to make insane jumps to get), and some you can only get after completing a specific task. Tickets are necessary to open certain areas and most of the time you'll need more than one ticket to activate ticket switches. While you don't need every ticket to beat the game, if you want to fully reactivate the entire Whoopie World, you'll need to get every single ticket.

Tokens

These gear-like objects come in three colors: silver, gold, and purple each having a value of 1, 5, and 10



(respectively). While these tokens seem as useful as the coins in Mario, you'll actually need to collect them if you want to get upgrades from



Tinker, the repair robot. Each world has a total of 200 tokens, and the last ticket for each world is acquired by getting all 200 tokens.

Machine Parts

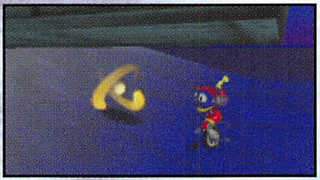
In every different theme park world, there is a large machine that operates a major attraction unique to that world. Jojo, the evil raccoon, has split the machine into seven different parts. Yup, you guessed it: In order to get farther into the game and reactivate the main attraction in each world, you'll need to find



the seven different machine parts hidden in each world. Once you've found all seven parts, return them to the machine's main console.

Booster Packs

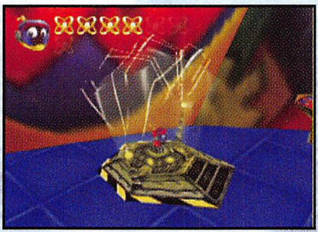
Booster Packs increase the health of our hero. Booster



Packs are hidden throughout every level so keep your eyes open!

Recharge Centers

Feeling low and slow? Well, take an electric shower! These are found all over the place,



the two main ones are found in front of Clowny Island, and at the bottom of the level entrance hall. They're free to use, so take advantage!

Vehicles

Every world has a different vehicle you can use. Some require a certain amount of



tokens before you can hop in. Vehicle commands differ with every vehicle, and they're





always listed at the bottom of the screen every time you jump in.

Rocket Upgrades

Tinker, the repair bot, will be able to upgrade Rocket with new tools and weapons when Rocket brings him enough tokens for every level. There are a total of four upgrades:

Slam (80 Tokens)
The Slam upgrade lets you stop an opponent in its



tracks and is quite essential. When you have an object or



enemy trapped in the tractor beam, jump and press the Z



button to slam the target into the ground.

Double Jump (250 Tokens)
The standard platform power-up is, not surprisingly, found here. With this power-up, you'll be able to Double



Jump (through the use of thrusters). You cannot use the Double Jump when you're in water. Simply press the Jump button again while in the air.

Freeze Ray (450 Tokens)
While the Freeze Ray is only useful on liquids, without this upgrade you'll find it very diffi-



cult to complete the game. When you're near water, press and hold the Z button while pressing A.

Grapple Shot (650 Tokens)
The last of Tinker's toys for Rocket, the Grapple Shot enables Rocket to hook onto objects where you can use your tractor beam to grapple. The



Grapple Shot is best used when you're standing on a grapple platform. To activate the Grapple Shot, press and hold the Z button, and press B. A red



line can be seen from Rocket's head. Use this red line to aim for the object you wish to grapple to. When you get the green lock-on, press B again to fire out the Grapple Shot.

Other helpful hints:

- When Rocket has an item in his tractor beam, instead of using the B button to put it down, press the R Shift button to turn off the tractor beam.
- Likewise, if you've got an object in your tractor beam and you start to aim with the B button, if you want to back up a step and re-position Rocket, press the R Shift button to cancel the throw.
- While in the tractor beam throw position, if you need to aim higher or throw the object farther, simply jump (A button) as you're throwing the object.
- Later in the game, objects may be thrown at you. You can easily catch them out of the air by simply pressing and holding the B button.

Clowny Island

This is where your adventure begins, and you shouldn't have a problem here. This level will give you good practice on jumping techniques and will get you used to the realistic physics of the game.

Ticket Locations

Ticket A
On top of the highest yellow flower in the park area in the middle of the island. Run past the mole, then jump up the flowers to the top one.

Ticket B
On a floating platform in the water in the back of the island away from the starting point. Jump across the small platforms, then jump and swing on the handle to the big platform.

Ticket C
Inside the Midway house. Win all three games. Feed the Presidents and knock down the Alley Cats. Chick Tac Toe requires that you throw a ball at the chicken while she's thinking about her move.

Ticket D
Inside the Bee-Ware funhouse. The entrance is right underneath the house on the beach. It's a honeycomb-patterned elevator. Complete the jumping sequences, and they'll lead you to the ticket.

Ticket E
Race the CornCart. There is a car on the boardwalk called the CornCart. It will challenge you to a race, and you'll need the DuneDog vehicle in order to beat it.

Ticket F
Beach Rings. Go through all the green rings around the island. The starting point is underneath the ramp to the boardwalk, near the entrance. Again, you'll need the DuneDog.

Ticket G
Make a Roller-coaster. Make the roller-coaster appear by finding the four screws and bringing them back to the square pad near the roller-coaster area, which has a picture of a screw on it. Once the roller-coaster appears, hop in the control console and draw a simple roller-coaster with a complete circuit. Jump into the roller-coaster to ride it.

Ticket H
Make a Roller-coaster 2. Once you finish ticket G, numbered targets will appear hovering over the roller-coaster platform. Make a roller-coaster that passes through all five targets to get another ticket. You have to pass through the five targets in order.

Ticket I
Start up the Dinosaur. Collect all seven machine parts, and bring them to the machine console, which is in an open tree near the dinosaur.

Ticket J
Get to the top of the Dinosaur. Go into the dinosaur through the secret entrance under his stomping foot, then navigate through the puzzles and hazards inside until you come out in his mouth. Go up the ramp to his nose, and jump up to the top of his head.

Ticket K
On top of the Midway. Find a crate and move it under the handles on the right side of the building. Use your tractor beam to grapple your way up to the roof. You can also do this by coming back after you have the Double-Jump move.

Ticket L
200 Tokens.

Machine Parts

1. Underneath the ramp from the beach up to the boardwalk.
2. In the park, near the big yellow flowers.
3. On the left side of the Midway.
4. Behind the loading platform for the Rollercoaster.
5. Near the DuneDog, on the beach under the rollercoaster platform.
6. Over a dune, to the right of your starting position, generally grabbed by jumping through it with the DuneDog, but you can get it by standing on a box and jumping to it.
7. Inside the Bee-Ware funhouse, in the honey path room.

Booster Pack
On the beach. Actually, it's under the dock in the water. Any time after you get the Slam upgrade, you can grab the frozen key and slam it free of its icy prison to open the gate to the other worlds. The next world you'll want to visit is Paint Misbehavin'. There are a few tickets you can grab in the main room before you enter.

Vehicles

Dune Dog (50 tokens)
Found on the beach right underneath where you meet CornCart.

Paint Misbehavin'

Paint Misbehavin' is much, much larger than Clowny Island, and you'll get to play around with two new vehicles. Exploration is a must if you want find all the items in this level.

Ticket Locations

Ticket A
Paint yourself the colors the guard wants. Jump into pools to make yourself green on top and orange on the bottom. The pools have a deep part and a shallow part, so you can paint your whole body, or just the lower half. The best solution is to jump all the way into the blue pool, then halfway into the clear pool (to wash off the blue), then halfway into the red pool, then all the way into the yellow pool. Then you'll look like what the guard expects, and he'll let you in.

Ticket B
Paint the four statues. Toss sheep onto the briar-covered pedestal to form stair steps, then jump up and get the HoverSplat. Drive it into the lower courtyard with the odd statues. Paint the Heart Red, the Tree Green, the Banana Yellow, and the Carrot Orange. A ticket will appear, and when you pick it up, the Pantheon will rumble up out of the ground.

Ticket C
Paint the magic spheres. In the cave where all the spheres are floating in a circle, occasionally emitting electric zaps, paint the floating spheres so they have the same colors in the same order as the clear gems on the floor. The order, going clockwise, is Purple, Green, Red, Yellow, and Blue.

Ticket D
Go into the pantheon you raised earlier to get ticket B. Climb up the statue and the handles on the gears in the back. Jump to the lower ledge. Roll out on the gangplank and jump onto the statue's toga. Go up the toga and along his arm to the middle ledge. Wait there for the other arm (with the torch) to come around, then jump onto that. Roll along the arm to the head. Roll up the leafy crown and up to the top. Jump to the nearby swinging lamp. Jump from that to another lamp, and from there to the high exit. Go outside, and note that one of the wires holding up the flagpole has handles up it. Jump up the handles, and grab the ticket.

Ticket E
Open the main gate. There are three pieces of a broken medallion on the main gate, right in front of you as you enter the world. The three matching pieces are in three smashable column segments: one in the first room, one near the color-sensitive guard, and one in the ruined area with the clown and the mosquito. The one nearest the mosquito is the one with the medallion piece. Bring the pieces near the gate and let them go, and they magically slot into place. Once the gate opens, a ticket is waiting behind it.

Ticket F
Jump across the tree. On the far side of the meadow, on the opposite side of the river, is a little building with a ticket protected by a force field. By jumping onto the stump a short distance away, and from there to handles on the branches of a nearby tree, you can jump up to the top of the building where there is a button. Push the button and the force field lowers.

Ticket G
Trigger the sheep switch. Under the dock where you first found the FinBot is a small niche with a ticket in it. If you look up, under the dock is a big button with a picture of a sheep on it. Grab a sheep and take it under the dock and let it

go, where it will float up and hit the button, lowering the force field.

Ticket H
Start Big machine. Collect all seven parts (listed below) and take them to the machine console, which is way up in the back of the upper pool and can be climbed to from the meadow by scaling the rocky cliffs.

Ticket I
FinBot rings. Near the big machine (the pump) are some rings you can swim through with the FinBot. You need to raise the water level by collecting the machine parts first.

Ticket J
Aqueduct. Once the water is raised, you can swim into the aqueduct entrance at the top pool. Inside, you must navigate through the whirlpools, through the fish ladder sections, and into the big round room. Inside there are a series of buttons to hit that eventually raise the three fountains, enabling you to ride the FinBot out of the room and down the last section, which eventually lets you out above the Pantheon, where there is a ticket on a pedestal.

Ticket K
On top of the pump platform, behind the pump, is a ticket. You need to raise the water level, then ride the FinBot over and poke around on the pump platform.

Ticket L
200 tokens.

Machine Parts
1. Near the entrance to the color guard's area.
2. In the ruins, guarded by a mosquito.
3. In the back of the Pantheon courtyard, above the back pool.
4. In the magic spheres room.
5. In the river in the meadow (use the FinBot to get this).
6. In the rocky cliffs above the meadow, on the way to the upper pool.
7. In the big pool near the big machine.

Booster Packs
In the pool behind the courtyard with the four paintable statues, guarded by a mosquito.

Vehicles
HoverSplat (125 tokens)
On a structure in the first area you enter.

FinBot (175 tokens)
In the water near a dock in the meadow outside the main gates.

Mine Blowing

Ticket Locations

Ticket A
Mushroom cave. Jump down into the pit in the first big room. Avoid the mushroom there, and go down the passage behind the waterfall. Once in the mushroom cave, use the mushrooms (they'll trap you inside of them) to do triple jumps up to the high ledges, and eventually to the really high ledge at the top with a ticket.

Ticket B
In the Cage. Once you start the BeamLift, lift up the cage and drop it so its edge is propped up by a small box. Then carefully slide under the cage and get the ticket. Be careful: it's possible to get stuck under the cage, which will require a reset. You get to keep the ticket, though.

Ticket C
Exploding colored gems. Go up three steps from the BeamLift room and you're faced with a new switch which is triggered by bombs. Grab a bomb and throw it at the bomb switch and a bridge will appear. Cross the handles and then go into the next room, and you'll see a yellow gem on the floor and a yellow gem embedded in the wall. By doing exactly what the sign here tells you not to do (throwing one yellow gem at the other) you can blow up the wall and get into the next section. Here you have bombs and more colored gems. Blow the walls, collect the gems, and throw them across the chasm into the last room. There you can match gems to blow away progressively more rock to reveal the ticket.

Ticket D
In the BeamLift room. There is a high ledge with a blowable wall. Use the BeamLift to move boxes to make a staircase up to this ledge, then carry a bomb up the boxes, blow up the wall, and collect the ticket.

Ticket E
Cannon Caves. In the BeamLift room, use bombs to blow away the three stalagmites, then climb up them and through the tunnel to a platform way above the mushroom pit room. From there, swing across a lamp to a secret room behind the statue of Whoopie the Mining Walrus, and into a set of caves where cannons will give you some trouble. Grab a cannonball out of the air and throw it back at the cannon to destroy it, leaving behind a useful bomb dispenser. Use bombs to blow away walls, and a huge hunk of floor in the last room, revealing a ticket and a button that starts the Pit Room Elevator.

Ticket F
Glad to Help. From the pit room platform, you can go across some moving platforms to an area where there are many mine cart loops. Ride the first loop and jump out at the row of lamps. Swing across the lamps to another cart loop, where you'll need to jump out and drive across a twisty platform to avoid being dumped out of your cart. Then get aboard another cart, and this time jump out and swing across handles to avoid the dump-off section. When you finally get to the end, there is an annoying clown, and a big door that can be opened by pulling on a chain. Unfortunately, the door closes when you let go, and the chain isn't long enough. Fortunately, the clown, being happy to steal anything you're holding on to, will steal the chain pull from you and hold the door. Drive in and grab the ticket.

Ticket G
Rolling Rock (no, not from Latrobe, Pennsylvania). Once the Pit Room Elevator is started, you can go all the way down through the false bottom into the basement of the pit. There, you can enter the Rolling Rocks area. Jump across the small pit at the beginning, and grab a bomb. Take it up the tunnel, making sure not to let it touch any rocks, and toss it at the blowable wall at the end. Go back and do it a second time, and ignore the third set of rocks. Just roll right past them to collect your ticket.

Ticket H
Start the big machine. Collect seven machine parts (listed below) and take them to the machine console, which is behind a large wall in the BeamLift room and down a short tunnel.

Ticket I
Ore processor. Once the big machine is started, jump across a variety of skills-based challenges inside a huge ore processor.

Ticket J
BeamLift room ledge. Move a box over into the corner of the BeamLift's room (where there's a large column that looks like a big drill bit) so you can reach the lamp handle there. Jump across several tilting platforms and use some handles to eventually get to a high ledge where there is a ticket.

Ticket K
Down in the pit basement is a wall that looks blowable. Get a bomb down there (from the start room or the BeamLift room) and blow up the wall. There's a ticket behind it.

Ticket L
200 tokens.

Machine Parts
1. At the bottom of the pit, near the bottom of the waterfall.
2. In the mushroom cave, near the back on the floor.
3. Behind a blowable wall in the BeamLift room.
4. In the exploding colored gem area, over the second pit.
5. In the pit basement, near the Rolling Rocks entrance.
6. In the Cannon Caves, going left from the first room.
7. In the Cannon Caves, going right from the first room.

Booster Packs
In an alcove near the entrance to the Rolling Rocks gauntlet, at the very bottom of the pit near the beginning of the game. You must start the pit elevator first.

Vehicles
BeamLift (325 tokens)
This is hidden behind some boxes in the big U-shaped room you come to by leaving the pit room and jumping across a pool of lava.

Arabian Flights

Ticket Locations

Ticket A
Stepping Stones. Jump across the small floating platforms, touching each one exactly once and ending on the far side. The forcefield in front of the ticket will drop, and you can jump in and grab it. One solution is (look-

ing down on the puzzle as the camera shows you, using U, D, L, R for up down left right): U, UR, R, U, L, DL, DL, L, U, R, UR, U.

Ticket B
Tower race. One of the towers has a spinning propeller on it, holding up the top of the tower. Land on the tower and push the button, and another tower will sprout a propeller and open up. Get to that one before the time runs out and push the button and another will open up. Visit four towers in this fashion and when you hit the last button, the strange forcefield around the cobra tower will vanish and you can collect the ticket.

Ticket C
Bomb toss. There is a tower with four bomb switches on it, spiraling up the sides, and a platform rotating around it. Land the carpet nearby, and toss bombs at the switches. When you hit one, the platform rises, giving you an opportunity to hit the next one. Miss one and the platform lowers. Hit all four before running out of time, and a ticket will appear on top of the tower.

Ticket D
Puzzle Rooms. One of the towers has a dumbbell shape on top; there are two towers connected by a passageway. On top of one end of the dumbbell is a small hole you can jump in, where you can blow a wall, avoiding an Arabian Clown. Go inside and find several challenges. First use bombs to hit switches to extend bridges. The bridges don't extend all the way, just enough to allow you to jump across. Then freeze ice cubes across a pool to reach a chest. Smash the chest open and find a key. The key fits a lock nearby that will open some doors. Then freeze ice cubes to navigate around a simple maze. Finally freeze your way across a pool with a whirlpool in the center of it. There are Carrier Bots in here, but with your freeze beam, you should be able to make short work of them, and the Mini Bots they release when smashed.

Ticket E
Magnet Tower. One of the towers appears to have magnet symbols on it, and steel boxes stuck to the outside. Enter the tower and find a room with three doors. Push a button and open the first door and find a steel box, a steel wall, and a button. Hit the button and the steel wall magnetizes, which allows you to stick the box to it and jump to the top to open the second door. The second problem is the same, but with less time available. The third problem involves a much higher wall and two boxes.

Ticket F
Carpet Rings. Fly through the 32 rings scattered around the level within the time limit. The course begins underneath the big central tower.

Ticket G
Chase the Roc. The Roc is the huge eagle-like bird flying around the tower. On the carpet, you can chase him and grab the ticket he has in his tail feathers.

Ticket H
Start the big machine. Collect 7 parts (listed below) and take them to the machine console, which is at the base of the central tower. This will start air currents which will raise the 5 colored balls into the air, revealing the entrance to the tower as well as the secret flying puzzle.

Ticket I
Inside the machine. Unlike most jumping gauntlets, the object here is to get from the top of the machine to the bottom. Jump into the hole at the top of the machine. First off, you have the sorter. Jump across this, following the arrows to reach the button at the bottom. Push the button and a fan later in the level slows down, lowering a platform into place. Now go ride an airstream back up to the top and follow the new arrows to a different button. Do it again and all the platforms will be in place to jump across. Jump across them and grab a handle. Jump across to another handle, let go of it and slide down a slide to another handle, jump across, slide, and jump across two more handles to a ledge. Here you'll find several fans that threaten to shove you into the center and the main airflow. Time your movement so you move across them when they're stopped. Next is a set of 5 fans, which has a complex pattern. Go past them in the following order: Lower Left, Lower Center, Upper Right, Upper Left, Lower Center, Lower Right, again only when the fans have stopped. Pick up your ticket and head out.

Ticket J
Secret Flying Puzzle. If you fly under the four colored balls on the outer arms of the machine tower, you'll hear a sound like a wood block being hit 1, 2, 3, or 4 times. Fly under the balls in order from 1 to 4 and a ticket will appear. The order of colors is Red, Purple, Blue, Green.

Ticket K
Hidden behind the blue restart platform on the outskirts of the world. Fly around the perimeter clockwise, looking at the backs of the towers, and you're sure to see it.

Ticket L
200 tokens.

Machine Parts
1. Right behind you as you enter the level.
2. On the steps of the tower where you start the Stepping Stones puzzle.
3. Tucked away behind the Magnet Tower.
4. In the entryway to the Puzzle Rooms.
5. On top of a low building on the outskirts of the world, directly adjacent to the Stepping Stones start tower.
6. On the landing tower for the Bomb Toss puzzle.
7. In an odd-looking one-of-a-kind short tower near the red restart platform.

Booster Packs
Underneath the red ball on the central tower, after the machine has been started and the balls are floating on air currents.

Vehicles
ShagFlyer (475 tokens)
Right to the left as you exit the platform you enter (the Purple return platform).

Pyramid Scheme

Ticket Locations

Ticket A
Climb the Pyramid. There's a jumping/swinging problem on the side of the pyramid facing you as you enter. Grapple to the first handle, then jump and swing to the rest, avoiding the triangular barriers sticking out of the wall. Once at the top, freeze your way across the pool to the ticket.

Ticket B
Tile Flipping. Around the other side of the pyramid is a small pedestal with a grapple pad on it. Step on the pedestal and it will rise into the air, giving you a good view of nine tiles, each with a picture of Whoopie or Jojo on it. If you use your grapple beam to hit a tile, it flips over, changing from Whoopie to Jojo or vice versa, and it also changes the tiles directly adjacent. Looking down, you see a 3x3 array of Whoopie faces, which is the correct solution. From the start position, the solution is to hit these four tiles, in any order: center, right center, lower right, bottom center.

Ticket C
Return of the Screws. There is a primitive Screw altar on an island in the fork of the river. Find the four screws and return them to the altar and the huge screw will unscrew and reveal a ticket. To get the screws onto the island, you need to master the jump-and-throw move. Stand on the shore with a screw, get ready to throw and aim toward the island, and jump into the air, then throw while you're at your peak. The first screw is in the tall grass right of the altar (looking at it from the pyramid). The second is on a ledge you can reach by jumping across platforms behind the island. The third is in a deep section of water below the island on the left. The fourth is hiding in a tunnel in the wall, to the right of the screw island, entered from an entrance near the wall connected to the pyramid that can be vaulted over using the kickers.

Ticket D
Transformatron. Inside the base of the pyramid, through an entrance right in front of you when you come into the world, is the transformatron. This machine enables you to switch the world from Light mode to Dark mode. In Dark mode, everything is filled with lava and ruined. Collect the 7 parts (listed below), and bring them here to activate the first portal from Light to Dark. The other portals must be found and activated by stepping through them from the Dark side, after which they will work in both directions.

Ticket E
Lava Race. Once in Dark world, you have little choice but to climb up the side of the

pyramid, by climbing up one set of steps a few notches, then taking a huge jump over to the other side, climbing up a short ways, then repeating. Once at the top, you jump into an ominously rumbling hole, and find yourself inside the pyramid, in a huge room filled with lava. Double jump to the nearby handle, and it activates the lava, which begins to rise alarmingly fast. Jump quickly from ledge to ledge (watch out, they drop out from under you), and then from handle to handle, to reach the top and a ticket. Then go down a short hallway to the room where the GliderBike is kept.

Ticket F
Circle of Ruin. In the light version of this area is a mysterious rotating stone circle with an arrow on it, and four tall platforms, only one of which you can directly climb on top of. In dark, most of the circle is gone, but you can still see the arrow. By going back and forth from dark to light, you will notice that the ruined circle is stopped in Dark, pointing the same direction the arrow was pointing at the moment you stepped through the portal. By stopping the circle pointing towards the one platform you can climb, you can climb up, across the ruined circle, across the strange ruined towers, and onto the platform with another dark/light portal on it. Jump through the portal and wait for the circle to turn 90 degrees, then jump back through and across the ruined circle to the ticket.

Ticket G
Cross the Lava. In the back of the dark world, near where the screw island would be, is the entrance to a round room with lava in it, and three rings of rotating floating platforms. There are lava walls in here, and you must jump across first to the outer ring, then to the middle one, back to the outer, into the middle one again, and last to the very inner ring and up to the central platform. Push a button and a bridge appears, making it easy to get back.

Ticket H
Dark & Light Gauntlet. In light world, you can reach this area by climbing up the side of the pyramid that has a huge Whoopie head on it, then trying to cross the suspension bridge. The bridge falls, but leaves a handle ladder up to the entrance. Once you get there, you can't do much until you come to the same area in Dark world. There, you can jump on the platforms sticking out of the lava, which turn out to be kickers, which you can jump across to get to the next portal. From there, back in Light world, you can freeze your way across the water and up the handles sticking out of the waterfall, and then go back to dark world. Jump across the uneven tilty pillars, and get to the top, where you switch back to Light world. Climb up the narrow wall over the waterfall, and jump across. Hit the last portal, and the ticket is waiting.

Ticket I
Secret Faces. On the side of the pyramid in Light world is a big Jojo head, with four faces on the wall above it. Hitting the button in front of each face switches the faces around, toggling between pictures of Whoopie, Tinker, and Jojo. Once you get into Dark, you see the same head, but with a crumbly-looking rock in its mouth. Find the cannon in the Circle of Ruin area, and grab a bomb as it shoots one at you. Carry it back to Jojo's head and blow up the rock in his mouth. You can then go into the secret chamber and see the correct combination: (L to R) Tinker, Jojo, Whoopie, Tinker.

Ticket J
GliderBike Rings. In Dark world, on the lower "track" around the world, working your way clockwise, you'll come to the beginning of a rings course that requires some driving and some gliding.

Ticket K
High platform. Driving counterclockwise around the upper "track" in Dark world, you'll see a purple platform hanging in the air off to the left of the track. Glide to it, and you'll see another one further on, and higher. Glide to that one, and then one more, and up above you'll see a really high platform with a line of handles running down from it. Jump and glide off the platform, and jump out of the bike just as you get near the handles. Grab a handle quickly, then swing and jump up to the high platform. Pick up the ticket, then just for fun grab the handle there in the doorway-looking area. It will take you on a pretty cool trip down all the way to the floor.

Ticket L
200 Tokens.

Machine Parts
All of these are in the Meadow Gauntlet, which is in the Light world between the pyramid and the screw island.
1. At the beginning of the Meadow Gauntlet, on top of a small pyramid.
2. On the platform after the flipping platforms in the Meadow Gauntlet.
3. On the platform after the rising pillars in the Meadow Gauntlet.
4. On the platform after the rising line of handles in the Meadow Gauntlet.
5. In the air above the first kicker at the end of the Meadow Gauntlet.
6. In the air above the second kicker in the Meadow Gauntlet.
7. On the final platform of the Meadow Gauntlet.

Booster Packs
1. Light world, on a ledge in the far back corner, behind the big screw, reachable by going through the jumping gauntlet back and forth over the river, then climbing up to the tunnel in the rock, and finally swinging across handles on the wall.
2. Dark world, on a platform hanging above the entrance area, near the pyramid. The platform must be gotten to by flying high with the GliderBike, then jumping out of it near one of the hanging handles leading to the platfom, grabbing the handle, and swinging up onto the platform. (There are two platforms here, and the other one has a 10 token coin.)

Vehicles
GliderBike (750 tokens)
Must climb up pyramid in Dark world and solve the Lava Race section (see the instructions for ticket E). If you don't have enough tokens to start the GliderBike, you can leave through the right passageway and reveal a shortcut that will take you back to this room without having to race the lava again.

Shortcuts
There are Dark/Light portals scattered all over the place, which generally are inactive in Light until you step through them from the Dark side. Once you've done this once each, they are activated for good.

Food Fright

Tickets

Ticket A
Marshmallow Jumping. Find the hopping marshmallows, which look and sound remarkably similar to the mushrooms from Mine Blowing, and use the triple-jump to jump off the high striped platform into the bottom of the cage high above the floor which holds a ticket.

Ticket B
Working for Scale. Almost directly opposite the marshmallows area is a big toothy scale, with candy scattered all over the floor, and a clown making it difficult to move the candy to and from the scale. With a little trial and error, and watching the needle on the scale, you should be able to find the correct combination, which is 1 large candy, 2 medium and 2 small.

Ticket C
Start the big machine. Collect all 7 parts (locations listed below), and bring them to the console, which is cleverly hidden behind the big monster's teeth, just in front of you when you enter the world.

Ticket D
Spinning Handles. Once you've started the big machine and climbed up to the top, you come into a strange mechanical area with (among other things) three large spinning discs hanging in the air, each with four handles hanging from it. Jump to the lowest disc from a nearby ledge, and from there to the next disc, and so on to a high ledge with a ticket on it.

Ticket E
Maze of Rings. Clockwise from the entrance is a maze of sorts with some glowing rings you should recognize. In this case, you need no vehicle; just jump and roll through them within the time limit for a ticket.

Ticket F
Feed Me. Counterclockwise from the entrance is a pipe with a large hole in it. Jump in the hole and discover a very fat, lazy troll, who whines that he wants candy. Grab the candy he desires from nearby dispensers and get it in his mouth before he changes his mind. Once he eats too much, he'll explode, leaving the ticket he was sitting on.

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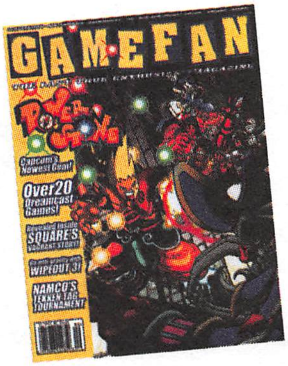
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Ticket G
Climbing gauntlet. Continue your climb up from the lower level, climb up the side of the machine, crossing timed flipping platforms and lines of handles hanging in the air. At the end is a ticket and the exit to the third level.

Ticket H
Flipping Bugs. Once you've started the SpiderRider, raise the ramp in the back of the room by going left (as you stand at the entrance looking into the room) all the way to the wall, taking a bomb along the strange worm-like pipe, and hitting a bomb switch on a platform in the middle of the toxic sludge. Then ride the SpiderRider over the ramp and into a small pool with several strange-looking bugs. Run into them with the SpiderRider to get them to flip over. They only stay flipped for a short time, then turn back. If you can get them all flipped over at the same time, a gate will lower allowing access to a ticket.

Ticket I
Monster Brain. Raise the monster up out of the sludge by hitting the other bomb switch on the right-hand side of the level. Then ride the SpiderRider up over his tongue and into his mouth. You end up in his head, working your way through the cerebro-spinal fluid (yuck) that surrounds his brain. Avoid the floating eyeballs, slithery nerve stalks, and brain-boring worms and get all the way to the center of his brain, where a ticket sits waiting.

Ticket J
Monster Eyes. The astute will note that the monster's eyes have the bomb switch logo on them. Since there is a bomb dispenser on a high ledge overlooking the monster (right above the entrance), why not try hitting his eyes with bombs? If you can hit one eye, then hit the other before the first reopens about 10 seconds later, he'll go under the sludge and sulk, which is your chance to quickly get into the SpiderRider and ride up onto his back before he rises up again. Once you are on his back, you can grab the ticket up there.

Ticket K
Behind the spider's eyebrows. On the lowest level of the bakery, looking at the big spider when you come in, there's a small niche behind the eyes of the spider, which can be gotten to by riding the spider/crane all the way around to the front of the machine, and jumping over his eyes. In the niche is a ticket.

Ticket L
Collect 200 tokens.

Machine Parts
1. On a ledge directly above the entrance.
2. On the narrow ledge just above and to the left of the entrance, close to the machine.
3. Over the marshmallow room, high enough that you'll need a marshmallow triple-jump to get to it.
4. On the high path that twists around the straw over the chocolate area (over the milk pool).
5. On a small ledge above the marshmallow area (near the chocolate milk pool).
6. In a niche high on the wall over the scale area.
7. Sitting in the stream of milk in the chocolate area.

Booster Packs
On top of the cage that holds the ticket in the marshmallow area. This must be gotten either by jumping from the ledge behind the big machine, or by making a harder jump from the ledge between the marshmallows and the chocolate milk river.

Vehicles
SpiderRider (850 tokens)
This is sitting in the pool of sludge right near where you enter the top level of the world.

Whoopie World

Tickets

Ticket A
The very first ticket in the game, dropped by Jojo on his way into Whoopie World.

Ticket B
Behind a hidden door in the back of the main platform that holds the big statues of Whoopie and Jojo.

Ticket C
5 Pillars. Climb up Jojo, then jump over his head and grab his nose like a handle. Swing back and forth and jump into his mouth. You'll warp to a strange room, where you'll need to hit 5 buttons in the proper order to raise 5 pillars. The correct order is to start with the button at 1 o'clock as you stand in the entrance looking at the room, and work your way around clockwise from there.

Ticket D
If you look around underneath the entrance to Paint Misbehavin', you'll see a handle and a small niche under the platform. Go to the entrance, but instead of jumping onto the warp pad, jump off the back of the platform and trigger the tractor beam. You'll grab a handle sticking out of the back of the platform, and can swing from there into a niche with a ticket.

Ticket E
Collapsing Path. Once you've opened up Mine Blowing, you'll find that besides just revealing the "true" entrance to the Mine, you've created a staircase that lets you go up to the top of the little hill there and jump into the hole in the top. You'll enter an underground cavern with a twisty rock path leading to a ticket. Try to run and jump along the path to the exit, but be quick, because the path starts collapsing as soon as you step onto it.

Ticket F
Once you've activated the airstream up to the clouds above Whoopie, you'll see two small clouds just off the main cloud. One of them acts like an elevator, dropping you down just below the main cloud, where you can grab a handle hanging below the cloud, and swing from handle to handle to reach a ticket completely obscured by a small cloud. Just swing through the cloud and you're sure to grab it.

Ticket G
Flying Screws. The other small cloud off the main one shuttles you over to a medium-sized cloud a short distance away. Jump on the medium cloud and you'll warp into a platform high in the air with four screws jumping around on it. If you can get all four screws into their slots (on the four colored towers surrounding the main platform), a ticket will appear. Jump off the platform or wait for the timer to count down to exit.

Ticket H
Once you've revealed the space elevator (by hitting the last ticket switch in the main Whoopie World room), ride it up to the dome room. From there, you can stand on the big rock near the center of the room and grapple up to handles on the ceiling. Swing across the handles to a tunnel that leads you to Food Fright. Instead of going down the tunnel, jump around the back of the room from ledge to ledge to a tunnel opposite the one to Food Fright. Halfway down the tunnel is a line of tokens roughly pointing at a section of wall. Pass right through the wall and down a short tunnel to a ticket hanging over the room entrance.

Ticket I
Rock Tumbler. If instead of following the tokens through the false wall as directed for Ticket H, you instead follow the tunnel all the way down, you can jump down a hole and end up in the Rock Tumbler area. Jump through three different rotating challenges and claim your ticket.

Ticket J
Back down in the main room of Whoopie World, just past the gate you opened way back at the beginning of the game, there's a small platform hanging in space off to the right, as you come into the main room from the Clowny Island entrance. Double-jump to the ledge, and from there to a series of handles that are spaced pretty far apart. Make it to the end of the series of handles, and a ticket waits.

Ticket K
Finish Jojo World. This is the ticket that Jojo's been keeping under his hat the whole game. Finish the Jojo World gauntlet (walkthrough below) and claim the ticket.

Ticket L
200 Tokens.

Booster Packs
1. In the back of the water pool. Must use the Freeze Ray to freeze ice cubes up to it.
2. On top of the pedestal in the back center with the handle sticking out of it. Must use the Grapple to grapple up to the handle, then swing very high and double-jump to get to the top of the pedestal.

Running outta space, here
No spoilers for JoJo's World... From here, you're on your own! Good Luck! **Dangohead**

It's a Me, Pikachu...

Bad news, all you Poke-haters out there, it looks like our dear old plumber Mario may be out of work thanks to the overwhelmingly universal popularity of Pokemon. The big 'N' has quite a few plans for Pikachu and his myriad of friends, and, while Mario will still be the premier mascot for Nintendo, expect quite a bit more expansion in the Pokemon universe.

Did I say expansion? I sure did. In fact, Pikachu is rumored to be starring in a handful of new titles for the Dolphin and Game Boy Advance. The first disc to feature the cuddly cute creatures known as Pokemon will be *Pokemon RPG*—a 128-bit big brother to the already popular Game Boy games. Pokemon racing and fighting games (a la *Smash Brothers*) are also rumored for the Dolphin, as well as an unknown Game Boy Advance game that will take advantage of the system's network features. I can already hear the cash registers ringing!

Sega Chu Chuses Their First Online Game

Early adopters of the Sega Dreamcast have to be disappointed that their brand new system has yet to produce a true online game. Fear not Sega-lovers, *Chu Chu Rocket* is on its way! Word from the inner depths of Sega has confirmed that, come this March, U.S. gamers will finally understand the *Chu Chu* craze that has been sweeping the streets of Japan lately.

Sega's first online game will in fact be Sonic Team's highly addictive *Chu Chu Rocket*, one of the surprise import hits of '99. There's even a rumored 'international' feature being planned so U.S. gamers can play against gamers all over the world. Keep an eye out for this one!

Nintendo's Dolphin In 2000 After All?

A well-vested source within the 'house that Mario built' has recently informed us that Nintendo is farther along with their next-generation system plans than we might have previously thought. Nintendo's first foray into a non-cartridge world should hit the Land of the Rising Sun just in time for the Christmas 2000 season (expect the software library to be thin, though). Now the bad news... it looks like the global launch that was originally planned has been scrapped—U.S. gamers should expect the Dolphin sometime in the summer of 2001.

Spyro Lights Fire To The PlayStation 2

Riding on the coattails of a very successful holiday season, it's rumored that Spyro the purple dragon will make his third outing on the PlayStation 2 in time for Christmas of 2000. Insomniac, the little dragon's creator, is already hard at work on the 128-bit sequel. Early word from the development team indicates that Spyro will have a whole new batch of worlds to explore, and, thanks to the sheer power of the PlayStation 2, his next adventure will be bigger than ever. Sheep beware—he's coming to get ya!

Bear Attacks Dolphin, Film at 11

Well kids, there's good news and there's bad news... The bad news is that, thanks to an overly busy schedule, Rare's plans to bring out a sequel to *Banjo Kazooie* on the N64 have been cancelled. The good news? Banjo's anticipated sequel will now be a premiere Dolphin game! The talented folks over at Rare have been rumored to be working on a brand new third person adventure, starring Banjo the bear and his overly energetic sidekick Kazooie, for the Nintendo Dolphin. Expect an unlimited amount of voice involved with the adventure, along with quite a few surprises and guest appearances. Banjo's next adventure should be a holiday 2001 hit!

The Summer of Shen Mue

The first chapter of Sega's monumental RPG, *Shen Mue*, might just see an early launch this summer to help Sega outshine the planned PlayStation 2 fall launch. How will they beat this incredible deadline, considering the game has an extraordinary amount of speech? Well, Sega executives are toying around with the idea of subtitling the game to speed up the translation of the product. Again, they are just playing with the idea at this point, but expect all things *Shen Mue* to be cleared up by E3.

NFL2K 2B Online Capable?

The producers of Sega Sport's *NFL2K* have recently confirmed that they're aiming for online play for the next chapter in the series. While a direct head-to-head option may not be likely, expect to be able to download the latest stats and players right to your VMU. The next installment of *NBA2K* should also feature this online option.

ECW: For Mature Wrestling Fans Only

On February 17th, 2000, Nintendo 64 gamers will gear up for the next step in the evolution (or shall I say de-evolution?) of professional wrestling, Acclaim's *ECW Hardcore Revolution*. Now the television show is decidedly more violent than the more mainstream WWF or WCW, and Acclaim is dedicated to delivering the exact level of adult, over-the-top mayhem associated with the pseudo-sport. *ECW* will be rated "M" for Mature and will maintain all the adult language and violence found in the wrestling promotion itself. As ECW picks up speed and viewership (through their new show on TNN and pay-per-view events), count on seeing the game make a similar splash when it hits shelves next spring.

Marvel vs. Capcom Sequel?

Reports out of Japan indicate that Capcom is working on a follow-up to *Marvel vs. Capcom*. According to reports, the game will hit arcades first (running on Naomi hardware) and head to the Dreamcast half a month later. Capcom officials state that such a game is purely rumor. I guess we'll find out whether or not the game actually exists sometime next month...

The Dreamcast's Second Coming?

Shiny main man and all-around "people" person, David Perry, has confirmed to the masses that *Messiah* **will** be arriving on Dreamcast. "I have decided today (actually just now) that we will do a Dreamcast version of *Messiah*. We will not be giving it to another team; we will do it ourselves, and do it the way it's supposed to be done. I think that, based on the unique style of gameplay, it will add really, really nicely to the Dreamcast's game library."

Shen Mue Gives Sega The Old Financial Push

Sega's stock jumped up as much as 7.7 percent after it was announced that *Shen Mue's* release date would be moved up. Shares in Sega rose as much as 160 yen to 2,230, their highest intraday mark since Sept. 21. An estimated 720,400 shares changed hands as of mid-morning, surpassing the six-month full-day average of 632,226.

Sega hopes to ship at least a million copies of *Shen Mue* through March; as you may recall, the game has cost Sega several billion yen to develop. Regardless of all of this, Sega expects to post a loss of 19.8 billion yen ($185 million). This is the third year in a row the company has posted a loss. Sega blames the tremendous cost of launching the Dreamcast as the reason for the loss.

Duke Gets Some On The PlayStation 2

Take Two recently announced that it has acquired the worldwide rights to publish a *Duke Nukem* game for the PlayStation 2. Concurrently, Take Two

entered into a development agreement with n-Space, the developer of *Duke Nukem: Time to Kill* for the PlayStation. Take Two expects to release a title based on the characters from the *Duke Nukem* franchise for the PlayStation 2. Take Two also has several other key titles in development for the PlayStation 2.

Namco Confirms Two New DC Projects

In the new issue of the Official Dreamcast Magazine, Namco's Consumer Business Director Hirokazu Harakuchi delivered the news all Dreamcast fans wanted to hear: Namco is still a multi-platform developer, despite their projects with Sony. On top of this, Mr. Harakuchi confirmed that Namco has two Dreamcast games in the works as we speak! No word yet on what the projects are, but both of the titles should see the light of day next year. Woohoo!

Dreamcast... One Million Sold And Counting!

Sega just informed us that the Dreamcast has gone platinum in just over two months of existence in the United States! The million sell-through mark comes in advance of the busiest buying time of the year: The post-Thanksgiving and Christmas mall stampede!

As a basis for comparison, the PlayStation (which launched in September '95) sold one million units in one and a half years, according to NPD Group of Port Washington, NY. Industry analyst, Sean McGowan of Gerard Klauer Mattison, believes that "One million units in the United States has long been considered a minimum threshold for a platform to be considered successful, and it's a level that usually takes longer than 90 days to reach."

"Sega Dreamcast's milestone is the interactive entertainment industry's equivalent to having a record go platinum or having a movie reach the $100 million mark," says Chris Gilbert, senior vice president of sales, Sega of America. "By hitting the one-million-units-sold landmark, it is clear that the Sega Dreamcast consumer has moved beyond the hardcore gamer and into the mass market." Gilbert continues, "We anticipate a record-breaking holiday sales season, for both hardware and software like those seen by the must-have products of past years, including Tickle Me Elmo, Furby and Beanie Babies."

Dreamcast on the level of Elmo, Furby and Beanie Babies... be still, my heart! What's next, *Pokemon*?!

Sega To Publish Maken X In North America

We have learned today from Atlus that they will not be publishing their recent Japanese release, *Maken X* in North America. The company has instead decided to let Sega handle the publishing duties; expect the game to be hit our shores late Q1 or Q2 of 2000.

Sega Not Publishing Shen Mue

Sega is not publishing *Shen Mue*, ever, never, ever! What, has Yu Suzuki's classic been canned? Hell no! It seems that CRI, the research institute of CSK (parent company to both CRI and Sega) will be publishing the title. I'm not clear what the reason for this is, perhaps just passing the costs of the project along to another arm of the company or something of that nature. So, *Shen Mue* will be presented by AM2 of CRI—weird eh?

Square Pledges More Support For Handhelds

According to Japanese newspaper Nihon Keizai Shinbun, Squaresoft will allow Bandai to publish over nine titles for their WonderSwan handheld system. It gets even better—three of the upcoming nine will indeed be based on the *Final Fantasy*, *Romancing Saga* and the *Secret of Mana* series.

The news publication also reports that Bandai hopes to enter the handheld market next year in North America in order to compete with Nintendo's Game Boy Color.

Online Console Gaming Taking Over PCs?

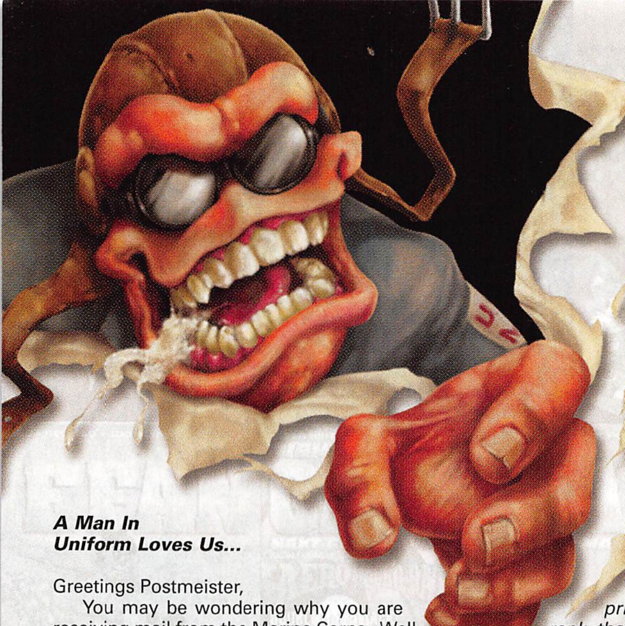
"The future is now... Soon you'll be able to play Mortal Kombat with a friend in Vietnam" —Jim Carrey, *The Cable Guy*

Who would have known that just a few short years after the crazy, speech-impaired cable guy spouted one of the greatest movie quotes of all time, it would all come true? Console online gaming is here, folks... and according to a recent report by Datamonitor, the online console craze will reach over 45 million homes by 2002—surpassing PC online gaming by a whopping 20 million!

In their report; "Online games and gambling in Europe and the US, 1999-2004," Datamonitor said there would be 165 million consoles in the United States and Europe by 2003. The game software market itself will continue to grow exponentially until 2003, when it will be worth $17.2 billion, with the console market accounting for $12 billion and the PC market $5.2 billion.

"The console phenomenon is coming online and console user-friendliness will bring an increasing number of gamers to play online," said Datamonitor senior analyst Frederic Diot. "While online gaming is currently a complex affair, console manufacturers will strive to implement a click-and-play online gaming experience through their respective consoles."

It's coming folks—game consoles are ready to take over the world!



THE POSTMEISTER

Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

A Man In Uniform Loves Us...

Greetings Postmeister,

You may be wondering why you are receiving mail from the Marine Corps. Well, I like your magazine so much that I took time out of my busy, rigorous training schedule to send you and the rest of the GameFan staff my praise. Before I abandoned my life of electronic bliss to jump into the deepest parts of Hell itself (you try going three months without playing video games, missing the release of the Dreamcast and *FFVIII*, and only being able to read about their glory!), I worked at a used video game store. There, I would happily play each and every video game imaginable, occasionally taking a break to sell one to a customer. It was the perfect life.

But I've wanted to be a pilot all of my life, so here I am in Marine boot camp, two weeks from becoming a Marine, and all I can think of is video games! Some people may wonder why, but I know why. The reason: Once a gamer, always a gamer. My entire life has involved video games, and at one point I depended on them to keep my wallet full. My former boss, knowing my true gaming spirit, had the foresight to see that I would be miserable to the fullest extent. So to help his former, loyal employee (and to make amends for the going away Barbie Birthday Cake), he sent me a package that restored hope to my tormented soul. In it was the September issue of GameFan Magazine.

Instantly, the previous shaping and molding of my Drill Instructors melted away and I was restored to my former video gaming glory. When Hurricane Floyd hit, and we were evacuated, I had 20 hours of cramped bus time to enjoy all of your hard work. I was amazed by the amount of detail and the varied artwork on each page. You truly do have an astounding magazine. I regret not being able to pay homage to the GameFan staff with cookies or the like, but we recruits do not have such things to give. I will, however, do my part and will faithfully find your operation with my hard-earned government money, and purchase many (if not all) issues of GameFan from here on in!

Private Recruit Murray, USMC
Parris Island, SC

If it were within my power, I would have shed many a solemn tear for your excommunication from the world of video games... but as all loyal Posty-fans know, due to my brief stint as product tester at Blowmeister games lo these many years ago, it is something I can never again do. Upon reaching the end of your letter, however, my mind drifted... to rolling hills, and scantily clad maidens chanting my name. Ehrm... no, sorry—wrong letter. However, I reveled in the knowledge that yet another hard-core gamer has been entertained and edified by the information bound within the pages of GameFan magazine. No other gaming publication on this planet boasts the production values, the wit, the integrity, and above all... The Postmeister!

My friend, you truly rate among the hard-core, because you have endured hardships the likes of which exist only in most gamers' worst nightmares! The deprivation of caffeine and junk food, being awakened before the crack of dawn by the screams of a drill instructor, only to spend your days punishing your body to the breaking point, without the hope of a break for a little electronic refreshment to stave off the pain. Such insane dedication to video games has earned you the honorary rank of Post-Fu Master! Wear it with pride as you serve your country, it is a rank that no military on earth can give, or revoke. In your struggles, always remember... one day, you may find yourself a high-ranking officer in a Postal Presidency, where your only duty will be to deliver the joys of hard-core game playing to the masses. I must say, your letter has put a song on my lips and a spring in my step... it has also given me complete appreciation of the phrase, "Military Intelligence!" Semper Fi, Private Murray... game on!

Lament For The Business Of Gaming

Dear Posty,

Pardon the low-tech chicken scratch, but my old Collegiate (3rd or 4th-hand) petered out, and... oh, well.

My humble thanks to you for actually deigning to speak of fighting-genre games in the December issue. Perhaps *Soul Calibur* has (re)opened a few eyes, or minds' eyes? However, I once recall purchasing (yes, *sob* it's true) a discounted N64 just to play *Fighter's Destiny* in the cool comfort of my own 'cell'. So, for the sake of the virtual lady known as Meiling at least, please don't say the N64 has been **completely** devoid of competitive fighting games. A Genki/Imagineer product, as I remember. But of course, you are right about the rest of it there: Nintendo's done a really crummy job in the genre. Which is one of the reasons (a big reason) they needed *Zelda: OOT* to pull their buns out of potential bankruptcy.

As for Namco, they used *Soul Calibur* as a throwaway bargaining chip and have now stripped & plundered *Tekken 4* to get *Tekken Tag Tournament* to Sony by March. Sad. At least Square (almost a subsidiary of Sony now) didn't screw anything better up to develop *The Bouncer* in the same time frame. The SADDEST thing here is that the Namco brass kissed off the DC before the US *Soul Calibur* launch! That was just... what... another bargaining chip? Crap.

Is Rare really going to do a decent genre game for the Dolphin? When will we be getting particulars? And who'll be doing what for this Microsoft X-Box (with its proposed superior chipset)? I gots to know!

Ned
Sarasota, FL

I don't want to rush you, I mean we're only on the cusp of a new millenium here, but they have these new-fangled devices now called "computers" that seem to be all the rage with the youngsters... and I understand they can be used to type and print letters without the need for white-out. In fact, from what I'm told, some of 'em even correct spelling errors for you! You might want to check into that... it's good to see that they're not just using all this technology for video game systems, these days!

Yes, I'm fully aware of Genki's Fighter's Destiny *for the Nintendo 64... as readers already know, nothing in the video game industry escapes the ever-watchful eyes of The Postmeister. I just didn't consider that a particularly great fighting game, and an average fighter amongst a sea of utter mediocrity doesn't give me pause to reflect on the state of fighting games for the N64... it's still utterly miserable, no matter which way you slice it. And as for your assertion that Nintendo needed Zelda to avoid bankruptcy, let me assure you... Nintendo has more money than they know what to do with. They're huge. Scratch that... they're huger than huge. They're enormous. Gigantic... gargantuan even. F'getaboutit, my friend—they're gonna be fine.*

Now, let's move on to Namco's decision-making process when it comes to the Dreamast. I'm forced to agree with you on this one, their decision was completely devoid of any compassion for the legion of Dreamcast owners who were knocked unconscious (like the swift application of the S.T.B.) by the unspeakable glory of Soul Calibur. But this business isn't about the love, it's about showin' publishers the money... and if Namco thinks they're going to make more money on PlayStation 2, then that's where their focus will fall. The up side is, we'll get killer Namco games on the PlayStation 2... the downside is, if you don't own a PS2, you're gonna be out of luck. That's the curse of the hardcore; you've always gotta be on the cutting edge.

It's obvious you've got questions... and the best solution (barring the purchase of one 'o these new-fangled Personal Computer doohickeys) is to read GameFan religiously... for as Private Cowboy so rightly pointed out this month, it is within these hallowed pages that, over time, all of your most difficult questions will be answered!

Dragon Ball Z Doesn't Stink?

Dear Postmeister,

In the June issue 1999, you stated that *Dragon Ball Z* stunk. When I read this I was very angry, because *DBZ* RULES! Just because the other *DBZ* games weren't a big hit, that doesn't mean all of them will fail. Haven't you heard of trial and error? They tried to make a good *DBZ* game, but it failed. But they can keep trying with *DBZ* games. Hope I wasn't too bossy, but that is how I feel.

PS: Could I get some DBZ posters for free from you maybe? PLEASE!

Andrew Ferguson
Taylor, Michigan

Andrew, my friend, it is rare when I laugh aloud while reading a letter sent my way... but today, I have done just that. I bellowed long and loud, and then passed your letter around to my fellow GameFan editors, so that they could also benefit from the healing power of laughter. When the laughter subsided, I took a minute to read your letter with a straight face, and came to the realization that there are, in fact, multitudes of anime fans who are absolutely dying for a quality Dragon Ball Z *game... for ANY system. Unfortunately, as you have so rightly pointed out, it hasn't happened yet—and it doesn't look real likely.*

However, though the DBZ characters you know and love are not present in these games, may I suggest two titles which deliver a similar style of game play without the Dragon Ball *trappings? Get yourself a Dreamcast, and try out* Psychic Force 2012 *and* Power Stone *(if you have a PlayStation, grab* Psychic Force*). If you are able to imagine that the characters brawling in these two games are actually your favorite* Dragon Ball *fighters, then the illusion is complete!*

And no, you cannot have any of my DBZ posters; after all, because I feel so strongly that DBZ stinks, I want to keep all of these excellent posters to myself and not share them with Dragon Ball's most devout fans. Now, seriously... another letter about Dragon Ball video games, and the P.T.F.F. law goes into immediate effect. (Note for the sarcastically-impaired: I don't have any DBZ posters, and I'm not a fan of the series. Please do not send letters hoping to trade for, or buy the non-existent posters that I've used to wallpaper my cavernous abode. They're not mine to sell, and if they were, I'd have put them on eBay by now...)

Intro To Game Programming 101

Dear Posty,

I have a problem and I really need help. I am a computer programmer (currently in college) and I have taken languages such as Perl, Java (visual J++), C++, HTML, etc... I'm getting together with a lot of my friends and we are going to make a game. The problem is...we don't know where to start. We're not looking to make anything complex, we just want to get some experience. My questions are as follows:

1. What language do most gaming companies use? (We decided to use C++)
2. Is there any specific tools or software that we need to use?
3. Could you give us any pointers that would help us out in making games in C++, being that we are beginners!

Richard Lee & Heather Kunn
Via the Internet

Ahh, not content to simply play and enjoy the fruits of other programmers' efforts, Lee & Kunn Productions have decided to traverse the slippery slope of game design on their own! It's a noble quest that you now find yourselves on, but yes... there is a tremendous lack of information available on how you can get started on creating your own video game! Back in the day (and we're talking Apple and Commodore, here), there were a variety of magazines that published all the code you needed to make your own, simple games. Those days, unfortunately, have long since faded into memory. Video games now consist of thousands of lines of code... and it can be a daunting task for any startup programmer!

1. Most developers use a combination of Assembly (machine) language and C/C++ for their games. Assembly language runs the fastest, but C and C++ are usually easier for the programmer to read and understand... and more importantly, for OTHER programmers to read and understand, since most of these games are developed by teams of coders.
2. Most developers end up creating their own sets of tools, depending on the job they need done. There are only a handful of public domain game design tools available, but they can all be located on the Internet.
3. The best pointer I can give any hopeful game designer is to know your chosen programming language very well before you begin. Designing and programming a video game is an enormous undertaking, and it requires both solid teamwork, and knowing your code backward and forward.

For intermediate programmers, there are several freeware game engines with source code available, so you can hack around in existing games to see what makes 'em tick (id Software's Doom is one example). Many people get their feet wet in level design first, and then move up into full-on coding. The script editors of many popular games let you get a little experience in changing a game's parameters. And of course, for everyone with extra cash to burn, Sony offered the Net Yaroze for programmers who wanted to improve their chops on the PlayStation hardware. But the best advice anyone can give you is to be patient, and take baby steps... after all, Quake was not built in a day!

Get Yer Captain Buck Decoder Ring...

I believe I have broken the code for Sony's launch next year. Sony is oft taken to using dates that display 'number power' such as 9/9/99, 9/9/96, etc.. Hardly anything works well later this year. However... if Sony wishes to "Launch!" next year in the US, it could make its date a tribute to the digital convergence it seeks to create with its box. A proper countdown ends in the digit zero, '0'. Digital technology is powered by one thing, binary algebra. All things are either 0 or 1. The date of October 01, 2000 is most likely. It is late in the year, it's "NOT SEPTEMBER" which is the rumor these days, and the date itself is a countdown.

digital 0 = 00
digital 1 = 01
digital 2 = 10

2, 1, 0 launch!!! = 10/01/00 launch!!!

I wonder what anyone else thinks?

Captain Buck
Via the Internet

My friends, my fellow gamers, this is what can happen when you spend too much time on the Internet, watching the X-Files and over-indulging in the canned meats I have so vehemently insisted we eliminate from the aisles of our nation's supermarkets. Our close, personal friend, Captain Buck, has quite clearly lost his mind, and we should all keep him in our thoughts as he struggles to keep his feet planted on the earth... because his mind is definitely floating among the clouds.

Buck, you and Twiggy don't seriously think Sony's engineers took the time to consult the marketing department, devising a twisted methodology for reversing the prospective release date into a series of binary algorithms that would keep computer science majors at bay for weeks, perhaps even months, trying to solve the riddle of the PlayStation 2 launch date... do you?

My good friend and "In Living Color" alumnus, Damon Wayans, was absolutely right... the mind is, truly, a terrible thing to use.

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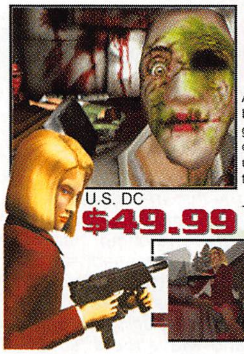
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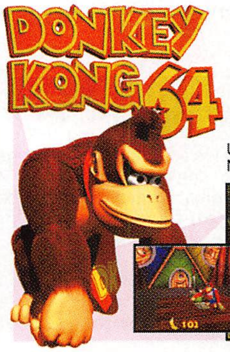
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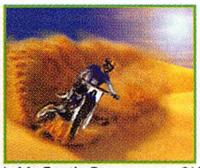
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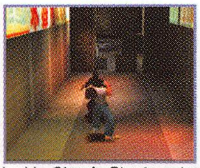




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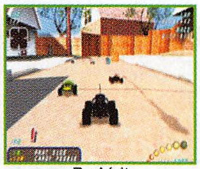
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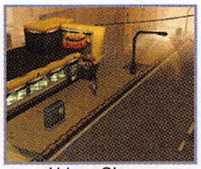
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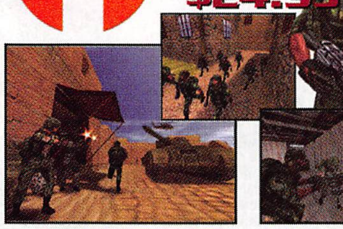
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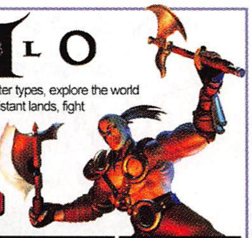


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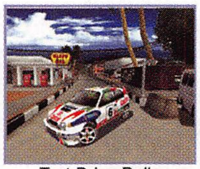
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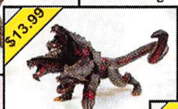


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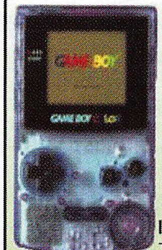
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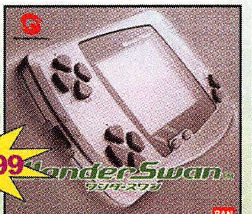


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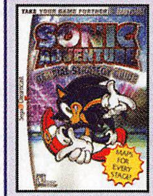
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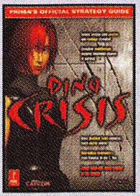
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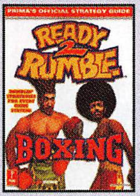
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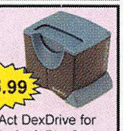

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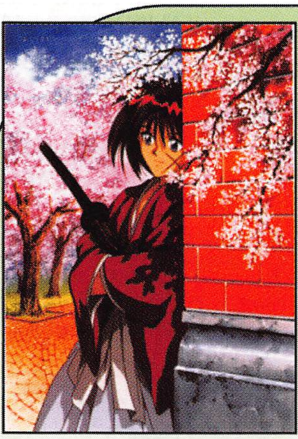
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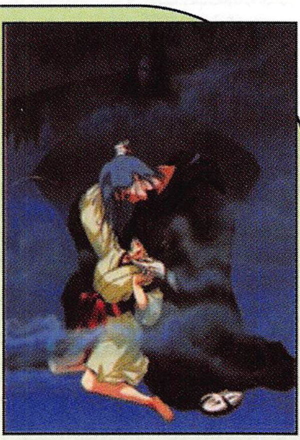
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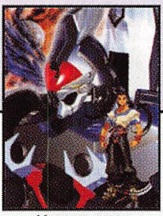
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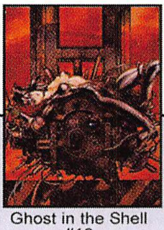
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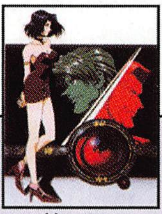
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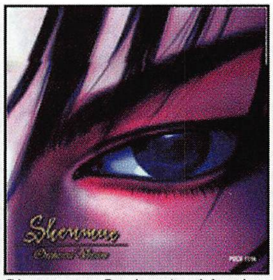
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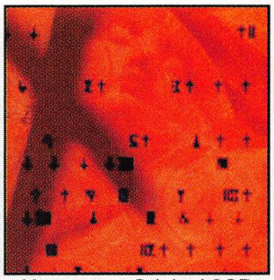
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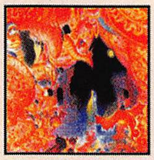
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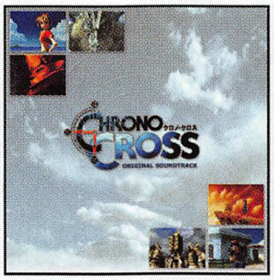
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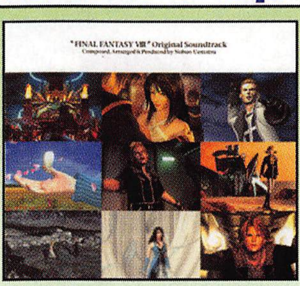
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The FF composer madman at his most funfilled moments. It would appear that our friend Nobuo Uematsu decided to take some serious pleasure in making this comp. Tailored towards children of the world, this splendor is a must own.

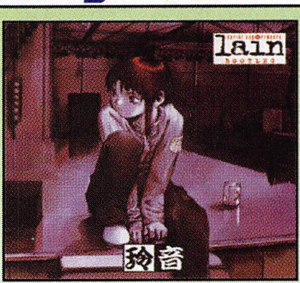
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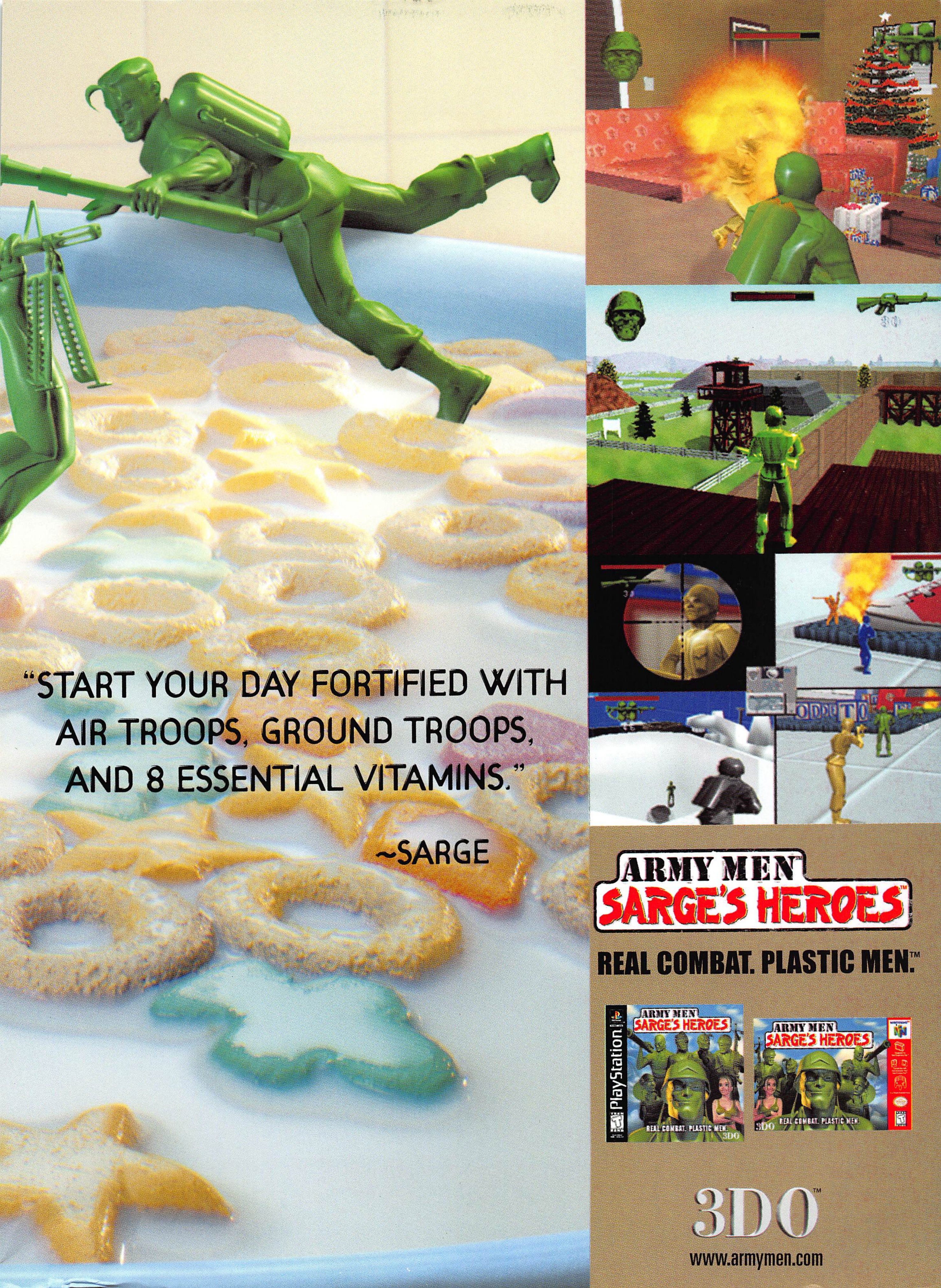


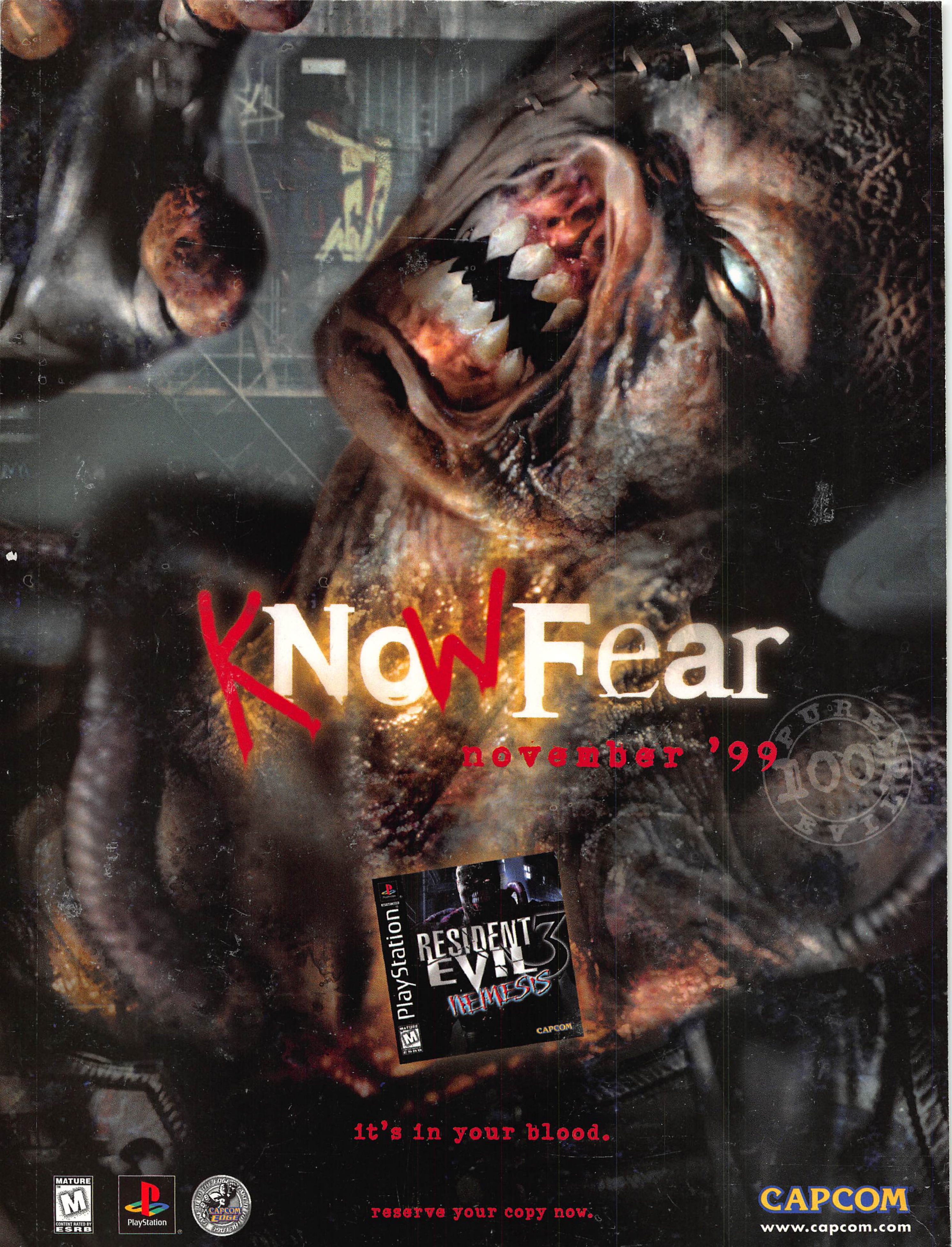
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Imagine all the glorious dark ambient doom of X 1999 orig, but without the periodical sax blaring abound. We must admit this CD is a tad depressing, but overall gorgeous non the less. Highly recommended.

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